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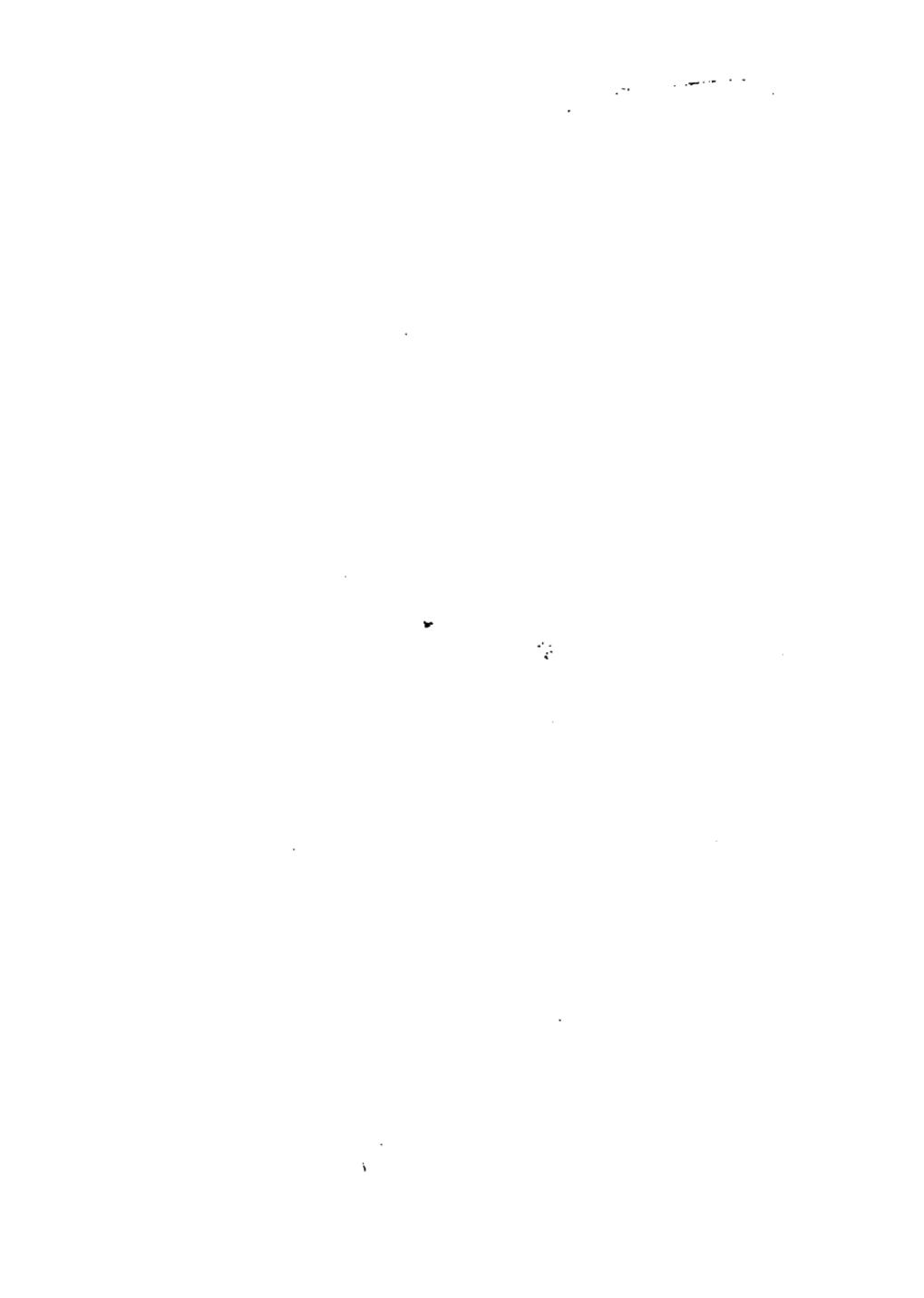
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## INTRODUCTION.

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### SECTION I.

#### THE LITERATURE OF THE PLOT OF 'HAMLET.'

THE earliest known source of the story on which this masterpiece of imagination and intellect is founded is the *Danorum Regum Heroumque Historia*, or *Danish History*, of Saxo Grammaticus, a valuable repertory of traditions and facts relative to the nations of northern Europe. Its author, a zealous collector of the popular ballad poetry of his fellow-countrymen, and a diligent student of the vernacular tongues of the Icelandic, Scandinavian, and Danish nations, was born in Elsinore about 1150. His father and grandfather had both borne office in the state; but he was a cleric of the diocese of Lund during the episcopate of Archbishop Absalon, primate of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, and premier during the reigns of Waldemar I and Canute IV. At the suggestion of his ecclesiastical superior, whose secretary he was, Saxo, 'the scholar,' commenced this chronicle in 1178, and finished it about 1198. The author died at Roeskilde in 1204. This *History* is written with considerable elegance, in Latin, somewhat after the manner of Valerius Maximus, and consists of sixteen books. The earliest printed edition was issued at Paris in 1514. Subsequently one of the Stephens produced a fresh impression, with prolegomena; and the work, which won the commendation of Erasmus, has since been frequently reissued, both in the original and in Danish translations. The best modern edition in Latin, for the purposes of the student, is that superintended by P. E. Müller and J. M. Velschov, printed at Copenhagen in 1839.

The story of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, occurs under the reign of Röricus, in the third and fourth books of the *Historia Danica*, though, so far as Shakespeare's drama is concerned, Saxo's third book contains the whole plot. The

Hamlet of the fourth book is of no Shakespearian interest. Because Saxo's history had not been translated into any modern tongue in the Elizabethan era, it was formerly supposed that Shakespeare must have read the history in the original. It is known, however, that the story was transferred from the pages of the Danish scholar into those of the *Histoires Tragiques* of François de Belleforest, in the fifth volume of whose collection of tales, published in 1570, *Hamlet* appears. It seems to have been speedily translated into English, though we have no exemplar of any version extant earlier than 1608. The title of this book is, 'The *Hystorie of Hamblet*. London: Imprinted by Richard Bradocke, for Thomas Pavier, and are to be sold at his shop in Cornhill, neere to the Royal Exchange, 1608.' If, as is highly probable, this *Hystorie* was translated and published not long after its issue in 1570, Shakespeare may have, through it, gained access to the story. It might have come to his knowledge by oral repetition in those tale-telling days; or he may have perused it in Belleforest's French, if not in Saxo's Latin.

It is the unanimous opinion of commentators, however, that the origin of the story of Saxo's *Amlethus* is not to be found in Scandinavia. 'No such name occurs in any [known] Icelandic record; for though there exists a Hamlet saga, it is acknowledged to be founded on Saxo's narrative,'\* the source of that being as uncertain as ever. Saxo probably derived the main elements of the story from some old ballad, and incorporated it into his narrative as history, after the manner of the earlier chroniclers. It is certain that in the *Danish History* the plot is to be found; that in Belleforest it was made more accessible; but it is, in all probability, to an early issue of the *Hystorie of Hamblet* that Shakespeare owed the plot of this pearl of plays.

It has been usual for Shakespearian critics to assume 'that a play upon the story of Hamlet had been written some years before 1590;' that 'Shakespeare resorted to this earlier drama as his original, and made the piece what it is, out of the inexhaustible resources of his own marvellous mind.' Malone confidently, though conjecturally, assigned that old *Hamlet* to Thomas Kyd, and his conjecture has been generally accepted as settling the question. 'It has been *supposed*,' as we have previously said, 'Kyd wrote a *Hamlet*; it is known Shakespeare did write one: why

\* Dr R. G. Latham's *Two Dissertations on Hamlet*, p. 36.

should we not conclude that this *Hamlet* was an early production revived?\* rather than assume that Shakespeare was the plagiarist-general of the age, without one tittle of foundation for the accusation. Until *some* evidence of the existence of Thomas Kyd's (or somebody else's) *Hamlet* as a pre-Shakespearian drama is produced, we need not enrol that imaginary performance among the sources of the plot of this play.

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## SECTION II.

## 'THE HYSTORIE OF HAMBLET.'

Among the books in Trinity College, Cambridge, which formerly belonged to Edward Capell, the Shakespearian commentator, there is preserved the only known perfect copy of a small work which bears this title: '*The Hystorie of Hamblet*. London, 1608.' This prose story is a rough literal translation from Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*. There were probably earlier editions of the *Hystories*; although from the multiplicity of the readers of such productions, and the carelessness with which they were handled, none of these have survived till our day.

In *Shakespeare Illustrated* (1753), by Mrs Charlotte Lennox, authoress of *The Female Quixote*, there is to be found (vol. ii, pp. 241-260) 'the story of Amleth, translated from the *Danish History of Saxo Grammaticus*'; and in Collier's *Shakespeare's Library* a reprint was given of the 1608 *Hystorie of Hamblet*. This has been reissued in Hazlitt's *Shakespeare's Library*, part i, vol. ii, pp. 211-279. Of the contents of this novelette the following is a summary, related as closely as possible in the words of the original. The book begins with 'The Argument,' on the iniquity of murder stimulated by ambition; next follows 'The Preface,' and thereafter, 'The Hystorie of Hamblet, Prince of Denmarke,' given in eight chapters, proceeds thus:

CHAP. I. A long time before the kingdome of Denmarke received the faith of Jesus Christ, and imbraced the doctrin of the Christians; 'the common people were barbarous and uncivil, and their princes cruell, without faith or loyaltie.' King Rodericke, after he had appeased the troubles in the

\* *Shakespeare: A Critical Biography*, p. 45.

country and driven the Sweathlanders and Slaveans from thence,' 'divided the kingdome into divers provinces, placing governours therein (who after[wards] bare the names of dukes, marqueses, and earls);' 'giving the government of Jutie' (Ditmarse) to 'two valiant and warlike lords, Horvendile and Fengon, sonnes to Corvendile, who likewise had been governour of that province.' Horvendile 'obtained the highest place in his time, being the most renowned pirate that in those days scoured the seas and havens in the North parts; whose great fame so moved the heart of Collere, King of Norway, that he was much grieved to heare that Horvendile surmounted him in feates of armes, thereby obscuring the glory by him alreadie obtained upon the seas.' 'This valiant and hardy king having challenged Horvendile to fight with him body to body, the combate was by him accepted, with conditions that hee which should be vanquished should loose all the riches he had in his ship, and that the vanquier should cause the body of the vanquished (that should bee slaine in the combate) to be honourably buried, death being the prise and reward of him that should loose the battaile; and to conclude, Collere, King of Norway (although a valiant, hardy, and courageous prince), was in the end vanquished and slaine by Horvendile;' who 'having overrunne all the coast of Norway, and the Northern I[s]lands, returned home againe laden with much treasure' (I, i, 77-92). King Rodericke gave 'him Geruth, his daughter, to his wife, of whom he knew Horvendile to be already much enamoured.' 'Of this marriage proceeded Hamblet.'

'Fengon, brother to this Horvendile, who [not] only fretting and despighting in his heart at the great honour and reputation wonne by his brother in warlike affaires, but solicited and provoked (by a foolish jealousie) to see him honoured with royal alliance, and fearing thereby to bee deposed from his part of the government; or rather desiring to be only governor: thereby to obscure the memorie of the victories and conquests of his brother Horvendile; determined (whatsoever happened) to kill him. Which hee effected in such sort, that no man once so much as suspected him, every man esteeming that from such and so firme a knot of alliance and consanguinitie, there could proceed no other issue than the full effects of vertue and courtesie.\*'

'Fengon, having secretly assembled certain men, and perceiving himself strong enough to execute his interprise, Hor-

\* Claudius.

vendile, his brother, being at a banquet with his friends, sodainely set upon him and slew him as traiterously as cunningly he purged himself of so detestable a murder to his subjectes; 'and under a vaile of meere simplicitie, that, being favoured for the honest love that he bare to his sister-in-lawe, for whose sake, hee affirmed, hee had, in that sorte, murthered his brother, that his sinne found excuse among the common people, and of the nobilitie was esteemed for justice. For that Geruth being as courteous a princesse as any then living in the North partes,' this 'murtherer slaundered his dead brother, that hee would have slaine his wife, and that hee, by chance, finding him upon the pointe, ready to do it, in defence of the lady, had slaine him, bearing of the blows which as then hee strooke at the innocent princesse, without any other cause of malice whatsoever: wherein hee wanted no false witnesses to approve his act, which deposed in like sorte as the wicked calumniator himselfe protested, being the same persons that had borne him companie and were participants of his treason.' 'The courtiers admired and flattered him in his good fortune.' Fengon, 'boldned and encouraged by such impunitie, durst venture to couple himself in marriage with her,' 'and the unfortunate and wicked woman, that had receaved the honour to bee the wife of one of the valiantest and wisest princes of the North, imbased herself in such vile sort as to falsifie her faith unto him, and, which is worse, to marrie him that had bin the tyrannous murtherer of her lawfull husband; which made divers men thinke that she had beene the cause of the murther' (III, iv).

CHAP. II. 'Geruth\* having (as I sayd before) so much forgotten herselfe, the Prince Hamblet, perceiving himselfe to be in danger of his life, as beeing abandoned of his owne mother and forsaken of all men; and assuring himselfe that Fengon would not detract the time to send him the same way his father Horvendile was gone; to beguile the tyrant in his subtleties (that esteemed him to bee of such a minde, that if hee once attained to man's estate, he would not long delay the time to revenge the death of his father), counterfeiting the madman with such craft and subtile practises, that he made shewe as if he had utterly lost his wittes' (III, iv, 188, 189), 'and under that vaile hee covered his pretence and defended his life from the treasons and practises of the tyrant his uncle' (I, v, 169-179; II, i, 76-99, ii, 172-215; III,

\* Gertrude.

i, 90-148, etc.). He ran ‘through the streets like a man distraught, not speaking one worde but such as seemed to proceede from madnesse and meere frenzie, all his actions and gestures being no other than the right countenances of a man wholly deprived of all reason and understanding.’ ‘But the young prince’ was minded ‘one day to be revenged in such manner that the memorie thereof should remaine perpetually in the world’ (II, ii, 524-582; III, iii, 73-95; IV, iv, 31-65, etc.).

‘Hamblet in this sorte, counterfeiting the maddeman, many times did divers actions of great and deep consideration and often made such and so fitte answers, that a wise man would have judged from what spirit so fine an invention might proceede’ (II, ii, 204, 207-210), ‘for that standing by the fire and sharpening sticks like poynards, one, in smiling manner, asked him wherefore hee made those little staves so sharpe at the pointes, I prepare (saith hee) piersing darteres and sharpe arrowes to revenge my father’s death. Fooles, as I said before, esteemed those his wordes as nothing ; but men of quicke spirits and such as hadde a deeper reache began to suspect somewhat, esteeming that under that kinde of folly there lay hidden a great and rare subtilty such as might one day be prejudicial to their prince, saying that under colour of such rudenes he shadowed a crafty policy, and by his devised simplicitie he concealed a sharp and pregnant spirit, for which cause they counselled the king to try and know if it were possible, how to discover the intent and meaning of the young prince, and they could find no better, nor more fitte invention to intrap him, than to set some faire beautiful woman\* in a secret place, that with flattering speeches, and all the craftiest meanes she could use, should purposely seek to allure his mind’ (III, i, 91-187). ‘And surely the poore prince, at this assault, had bin in great danger, if a gentleman† (that in Horvendile’s time had been nourished with him—I, ii, 160-178) ‘had not shewne himself more affectionated to the bringing up he had received with Hamblet, than desirous to please the tirant ;’ ‘and therefore, by certaine signes, he gave Hamblet intelligence in what danger he was like to fall,’ ‘which much abashed the prince, as then beeing wholly in affection to the lady—but by her he was likewise informed of the treason—as beeing one that from her infancy loved and favoured him and would have beeene exceeding sorrowful for his misfortune,’ ‘whome she

\* Ophelia.

† Horatio.

loved more than herselfe.' The prince 'deceived the couriers ;' every man thereupon assured themselves that without doubt hee was distraught of his senses, that his braines were as then wholly void of force, and incapable of reasonable apprehension, so that as then Fengon's practise took no effect.'

CHAP. III. 'Among the friends of Fengon, there was one\* that, above all the rest, doubted of Hamblet's practises in counterfeiting the madman, who, for that cause, said that it was impossible that so craftie a gallant as Hamblet, that counterfeited the foole, should be discovered with so common and unskilful practises, which might easily be perceived, and that to find out his politique pretense it were necessary to invent some subtile and crafty meanes more attractive, whereby the gallant might not have the leasure to use his accustomed dissimulation, which to effect he said he knewe a fit waie, and a most convenient meane to effect the king's desire, and thereby to intrap Hamblet in his subtillties, and cause him of his owne accord to fall into the net prepared for him, and thereby evidently shewe his secret meaning. His devise was this : that King Fengon should make as though he were to goe some long voyage, concerning affayres of great importance, and that in the meantime Hamblet should be shut up alone in a chamber with his mother, wherein some other should secretly be hidden behind the hangings, unknowne either to him or his mother, there to stand and heare their speeches, and the complots by them to be taken,' 'and withall offered himselfe to be the man that should stand to hearken and beare witness of Hamblet's speeches with his mother' (III, iii). 'This invention pleased the king exceeding well.' He 'issued out of his pallace, and rode to hunt in the forest ; meantime the counsellor entered secretly into the queene's chamber, and there hid himself behinde the arras, not long before the queene and Hamblet came thither, who being craftie and politique as soone as he was within the chamber, doubting some treason, and fearing, if he should speak severely and wisely to his mother touching his secret practises, he should be understood, and by that meanes intercepted, used his ordinary manner of dissimulation, and began to come like a cocke beating with his armes (in such manner as cockes use to strike with their winges) upon the hangings of the chamber, whereby feeling something stirring under them, he cried, *A*

\* Polonius.

*rat, a rat!*" (IV, i, 10); "and presently drawing his sword, thrust it into the hangings, which done, pulled the counsellour (halfe dead) out by the heeles, made an end of killing him" (III, iv). "He came againe to his mother, who, in the meantime, wept and tormented herself to see all her hopes frustrate." "While in this sorte she sate tormenting herselfe, Hamblet entered into the chamber, who, having once againe searched every corner of the same, distrusting his mother as well as the rest, and perceiving himselfe to bee alone, beganne in sober and discreet manner to speak unto her, saying, What treason is this . . . that covereth the most wicked and detestable crime that man could ever imagine or was committed? How may I be assured to trust you that "given over to her pleasure, runnest spreading forth her armes joyfully to embrase the trayterous, villainous tyrant that murthered my father," "entertaining him insteede of the deere father of your miserable and discomfited sonne? . . . Is this the parte of a queene and daughter to a king?—to follow the pleasure of an abominable king, that hath murthered a farre more honeste and better man than himselfe in massacring Horvendile, the honour and glory of the Danes, who are now esteemed of no force nor valour at all, since the shining splendure of knighthood was brought to an ende by the most wickedest and cruellest villain living upon earth: I for my part will never account him for my kinsman, nor once know him for mine uncle, nor you, my dear mother, for not having respect to the blud that ought to have united us so straitly together, and who neither with your honour nor without suspition of consent to the death of your husband could ever have agreed to have marryd with his cruel enemie: O Queene Geruthe, . . . it was an unbridled desire that guided the daughter of Rodericke to imbrase the tirant Fengon, and not to remember Horvendile (unworthy of so strange entertainment), neither that he killed his brother traiterously, and that shée beeing his father's wife betrayed him, although hee so well favoured and loved her, that for her sake hee utterly bereaved Norway of her riches and valiant souldiers, to augment the treasures of Rodericke, and make Geruthe wife to the hardyest prince in Europe." "It is not the parte of a woman, much lesse of a princesse, in whome all modestie, curtesie, compassion, and love ought to abound, thus to leave her deere child to fortune in the bloody and murtherous hands of a villain and traytor. . . . Bee not offended, I pray you, madam, if transported with dolour and grieve I specke so boldly unto you, and that I

respect you lesse than dutie requireth, for you, having forgotten mee, and wholly rejected the memorie of the deceased king, my father, must not be abashed if I also surpassee the bounds and limits of due consideration. Beholde into what distress I am now fallen, and to what mischief my fortune and your over-lightnesse and want of wisdom have reduced mee, that I am constrained to play the madde man to save my life, instead of using and practising armes, following adventures, and seeking all meanes to make myselfe knowne to be the true and undoubted heire of the valiant and vertuous King Horvendile' (III, iv). 'The gestures of a foole are fit for me to the end, that guiding myselfe wisely therein, I may preserve my life for the Danes, and the memory of my late deceased father, for that the desire of revenging his death is so engraven in my heart, that, if I dye not shortly, I hope to take such and so great vengeance, that these countreyes shall for ever speeke thereof.' 'To conclude, weepe not (madam) to see my folly, but rather sigh and lament your owne offence, tormenting your conscience in regard of the infamie that hath so defiled the ancient renowne and glorie that (in times past) honoured Queene Geruth ; for we are not to grieve at other men's vices, but for our owne misdeedes and great follyes.'

'The queene perceived herselfe neerly touched, and that Hamblet mooved her to the quicke, where shee felt herselfe intressed; nevertheless shee forgot all disdaine and wrath, which thereby shee might as then have had, hearing herselfe so sharply chiden and reproved, for the joy shee then conceaved, to behold the gallant spirit of her sonne, and to think what shee might hope and the easier expect of his so great policie and wisdome. But, on the other side, she durst not lift up her eyes to behold him, remembiring her offence, and, on the other side, she would gladly have imbraced her sonne in regard of the wise admonitions by him given unto her, which as then quenched the flames of unbridled desire that before had mooved her to affect King Fengon : to engraff in her heart the vertuous actions of her lawfull spouse, whome inwardly shee much lamented, when shee beheld the lively image and portraiture of his vertue and grete wisdome in her childe, representing his father's haughtie and valiant heart : and so, overcame and vanquished with this honest passion, and weeping most bitterly, having long time fixed her eyes upon Hamlet, as beeing ravished with some great and deepe contemplation, and as it were wholy amazed ; at the last, imbracing him in her armes (with the like love that

a vertuous mother may or can use to kisse and entertaine her owne childe), she spake unto him in this manner : 'I know well, my sonne, that I have done thee great wrong in marrying with Fengon, the cruel tyrant and murtherer of thy father and my loyall spouse ; but when thou shalt consider the small meanes of resistance, and the treason of the pallace, with the little cause of confidence we are to expect or hope for of the courtiers, all wrought to his will ; as also the power hee made ready, if I should have refused to like of him, thou wouldest rather excuse than accuse mee of lasciviousness or inconstancie, much lesse offer mee that wrong to suspect that ever thy mother Geruthe once consented to the death and murther of her husband.'

'Madame (sayd Hamlet), I will put my trust in you, and from hencefoorth meane not to meddle further with your affayres, beseeching you (as you love your owne flesh and blood) that you will from hencefoorth no more esteeme of mine enemie, whom I wil surely kill or cause to be put to death. If I lay handes upon Fengon it will neither be felonie nor treason, hee being neither my king nor my lord. . . . Either a glorious death shall be mine ende, or with my sword in hand (laden with triumph and victorie) I shall bereave them of their lives that made mine unfortunate, and darkened the beames of that vertue which I possessed from the blood and famous memory of my predecessors.' 'I have so great confidence in my fortune (that hitherto hath guided the action of my life) that I shall not die without revenging myself upon mine enemie, and that himselfe shall be the instrument of his owne decay, and to execute that which of myself I durst not have enterprised.' 'After this, Fengon (as if hee had beene out some long journey) came to the court againe and asked for him that had received the charge to play the intelligencer, to entrap Hamlet in his dissembled wisdome, was abashed to heare neither newes nor tydings of him, and for that cause asked Hamlet what was become of him, naming the man.' 'The prince . . . answered and sayd, that the counsellor he sought for was gone,' and that with him, 'the hogs meeting him, had filled their bellyes' (IV, ii).

CHAP. IV. 'A man would have judged anything rather than that Hamblet had committed that murther, neverthelesse Fengon could not content himselfe, but still his minde gave him that the foole would play him some trick of leigerde-maine, and willing would have killed him, but he feared King Rodericke, his father-in-law, and further durst not

offend the queene, mother to the foole, whom she loved and much cherished ; shewing great grieve and heaviness to see him so transported out of his wits. And in that conceite, seeking to be rid of him, determined to find the meanes to doe it by the ayde of a stranger, making the King of England minister of his massacring resolution, choosing rather that his friende should defile his renowne with so great a wickednesse, than himselfe to fall into perpetuell infamie, by an exploite of so great crueltie, to whom hee purposed to send him, and by letters desire him to put him to death' (IV, iii). 'Hamblet, understanding that he should be sent to England presently, doubted the occasion of his voyage, and for that cause, speaking to the queene, desired her not to make any shewe of sorrow or grieve for his departure, but rather counterfeit a gladnesse to be rid of his presence, whom although she loved yet shee dayly grieved to see him in so pitifull estate, deprived of all sense and reason ; desiring her farther that shee should hang the hall with tapestrie and make it fast with nayles upon the walles, and keepe the brands for him which hee had sharpened at the points ; . . . lastly he counselled her that the yeere after his departure beeing accomplished, she should celebrate his funerals ; assuring her that at the same instant, she should see him return with greate conteintment and pleasure unto her from that his voyage. Now, to beare him company, two of Fengon's faithfull ministers,\* bearing letters ingraved in wood, that contained Hamlet's death, in such sort as he had advertised the King of England. But the subtle Danish prince (being at sea), whilst his companions slept, having read the letters and knowne his uncle's great treason, with the wicked and villanous mindes of the two courtiers that led him on to the slaughter ; rased out the letters that concerned his death, and instead thereof, graved others, with commission to the King of England to hang his two companions ; and not content to turne the death they had devised against him upon their owne neckes, wrote farther, that King Fengon willed him to give his daughter to Hamlet in marriage' (V, ii, 12-62) ; 'and so arriving in England, the messengers presented themselves to the king, giving him Fengon's letters ; who, having read the contents, said nothing as then, but stayed convenient time to effect Fengon's desire, meantime using the Danes familiarly.' 'The king, admiring the young prince, and behoulding in him some matter of greater respect than in

\* Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

the common sort of men, gave him his daughter in marriage, according to the counterfeit letters by him devised, and the next day caused the two servants of Fengon to be executed, to satisfie, as he thought, the king's desire; but Hamlet, although the sport pleased him well, and that the King of England could not have done him a greater favour, made as though he had been much offended, threatening the king to be revenged; but the king, to appease him, gave him a great sum of gold which Hamlet caused to be molten, and put into two staves made hollow for the same purpose, to serve his turn therewith, as need should require; for of all other the king's treasures he took nothing with him into Denmarke but onely these two staves, and as soone as the yeere began to bee at an end, having somewhat before obtained license of the king, his father-in-law, to depart, went for Denmarke; then with all the speede hee could to retурne into England to marrye his daughter; and so set sayle for Denmarke.'

CHAP. V. 'Hamblet, in that sort, sayling into Denmarke, being arrived in the country, entered into the palace of his uncle, the same day that they were celebrating his funeralls, and going into the hall, procured no small astonishment and wonder to them all, no man thinking other than that he had becene deade; among the which many of them rejoyned not a little, for the pleasure which they knew Fengon would conceave for so pleasant a losse, and some were sadde, remembraunce the honourable King Horvendile, whose victories they could by no meanes forget, much less deface out of their memories that which appertained unto him, who as then greatly rejoyned to see a false report spred of Hamlet's death, and that the tyrant had not yet obtained his will of the heire of Jutie, but rather hoped that God would restore him to his senses againe for the good and welfare of that province. Their amazement at the last being turned into laughter, all that as then were assistant at the funerall banquet of him whome they esteemed dead, mocked at each other for having been so simply deceived, and wondring at the prince, that in his so long a voyage he had not recovered any of his senses, asked what was become of them that had borne him company into Greate Britain, to whom he made answere (shewing them the two hollow staves, wherein he had put his molten golde, that the King of England had given him to appease his fury concerning the murder of his two companions), and said here they are both. Whereat many that already knew his humours, presently conjectured that hee had plaide some tricke of legerdemaine, and to

deliver himselfe out of danger, had throwne them into the pitte prepared for him, so that fearing to follow after them and light upon some evil adventure, they went presently out of the court, and it was well for them that they did do so, considering the tragedie acted by him that same daie, being accounted his funerall, but in trueth their last daies, that as then rejoyned for their overthrowe; for when every man busied himselfe to make good cheare, and Hamblet's arrival provoked them more to drinke and carouse, . . . which when Hamlet perceiving, and finding so good opportunitie to effect his purpose and be revenged on his enemies, . . . made the hangings to fall downe and cover them all over, which he nailed to the ground, being boorded, and at the ends thereof he stuck the brands whereof I spake before by him sharpned, which served for prickes, binding and tying the hangings in such sort, that what force so ever they used to loose themselves, it was impossible to get from under them, and presently he set fire in the foure corners of the hal, in such sort that all were as then therein not one escaped away, but were forced to purge their sins by fire' (I, v, 12), 'all of them dying in the unevitable and merciless flames of the whot and burning fire. . . . The prince, knowing that his uncle before the end of the banquet had withdrawne himselfe into his chamber, which stood apart from the place where the fire burnt, went thither, and, entring into the chamber, layd hand upon the sword of his father's murtherer, leaving his owne in the place, which while he was at the basket some of the courtiers had nailed fast into the scaberd, and, going on Fengon, said, I wonder, disloyal king, how thou canst sleep heere at thine ease; and all thy palace is burnt, the fire thereof having burnt the greater part of thy courtiers and ministers of thy cruelty and detestable tyranies; and, which is more, I cannot imagine how thou shouldst wel assure thyself and thy estate, as now to take thy ease, seeing Hamlet so neere thee armed with the shaftes by him prepared long since, and at this present is redy to revenge the trayterous injury by thee done to his lord and father.'

\* Fengon, as then the truth of his nephew's terrible practise, and hering him speake with stayed mind, and, which is more, perceived a sword naked in his hand, which he already lifted up to deprive him of his life, leaped quickly out of the bed, taking hold of Hamlet's sworde, that was nayled into the scaberd, which, as he sought to pull out, Hamlet gave him such a blow upon the chine of the necke that hee cut his

head cleane from his shoulders, and as he fell to the ground sayd : This just and violent death is a first reward for such as thou art ; now goe thy wayes, and when thou comest in hell, see thou forget not to tell thy brother (whom thou trayterously slewest) that it was his sonne that sent thee thither,\* with the message to the ende that, beeing comforted thereby, his soul may rest among the blessed spirits, and quit me of the obligation which bound mee to pursue his vengeance upon mine owne blood, seeing it was by thee that I lost the chief thing that led me to this alliance and consanguinitie.

' Hamlet having in this manner revenged himselfe, durst not presently declare his return to the people, but, to the contrary, determined to work by policie, so to give them intelligence, what he had done and the reason that drewe him thereunto ; so that, being accompanied with such of his father's friends that then were rising, he stayed to see what the people would doe, when they shoule heare of that sodaine and fearfull action. The next morning the townes bordering thereaboutes, desiring to know from whence the flames of fire proceeded the night before they had seene, came thither, and perceiving the king's pallace burnt to ashes and many bodyes (most part consumed) lying among the ruines of the house, all of them were much abashed, nothing being left of the palace but the foundation : but they were much more amazed to beholde the body of the king, all bloody, and his head cut off lying hard by him, whereat some began to threaten revenge, yet not knowing against whom ; others, beholding so lamentable a spectacle, armed themselves, the rest rejoicing, yet not daring to make any shew thereof, some detesting the crueltie, others lamenting the death of their prince ; but the greatest part, calling Horvendile's murder to remembrance, acknowledging a just judgment from above, that had throwne downe the pride of the tyrant : and in this sort, the diversities of opinions among that multitude of the people being many, yet every man ignorant what would be the issue of that tragedie, none stirred from thence, neither yet attempted to move any tumult, every man fearing his owne skine, and distrusting his neighbour, esteeming each other to be consenting to the massacre.'

Here the Shakespearian interest of the novel ceases. Chap. VI. tells ' How Hamlet, having slaine his uncle, and burnt his palace, made an oration to the Danes, to shewe them what he had done : and how they made him King of

\* See 'Down, down to hell, and say I sent thee thither' — 3 Hen. VI, V, vi, 67.

Denmarke ;' Chap. VII. 'How Hamlet, after his coronation, went into England, and how the King of England secretly would have put him to death ; and how he slew the King of England ; and returned again into Denmarke, with two wives ;' Chap. VIII. 'How Hamlet in Denmarke was assailed by Wiglerus his uncle, and after betrayed by his last wife, called Hermetrude, and was slaine ; after whose death she maryed his enemie, Wiglerus.'

'Such was the ende of Hamlet, sonne to Horvendile, prince of Jutie ; to whom, if his fortune had been equal with his mind and natural giftes, I know not which of the ancient Grecians and Romans had been able to have compared with him for vertue and excellencie ; but hard fortune following him in all his actions, and yet he vanquishing the malice of his time with the vigour of constancie, hath left a notable example of haughtie courage, worthy of a great prince, arming himselfe with hope in things that were wholly without any colour or shewe thereof, and in all his honourable actions made him worthie of perpetuall memorie, if only one spot had not blemished and darkened a good parte of his prayse.'

'This story gave Shakespeare the incidents of the murder of the father; the . . . subsequent marriage of the mother and uncle; the shamming madness of the son, with the method of it—"a grete and rare subtyle;" the attempt to find out the secret by "a faire and beautifull woman in a secret place;" Hamlet's interview with his mother, with some one listening behind the arras; the "A rat, a rat;" the reproach of the mother by the son; the sending Hamlet to England with two of the murderer's ministers, to be killed; and Hamlet's revenge on them.\* But while 'keeping to the basis, and in a great measure to the outline, of the *Hystorie*, Shakespeare yet creates it anew after a far higher type, and subtly informs it with a higher spirit, by which it becomes glorified.'† There is no apparition in the original story; the foundation on which Ophelia has been constructed is singularly slight; there is no prototype of Laertes or Reynaldo; and the characters of Horatio, Polonius, Osric, etc., are all but entirely due to the teeming activity of the sympathetic and shaping spirit of Shakespeare's imagination. They are in fact mere hints made vital.

The story is also found in the *Historia Danica* of Johannes Meursius, Professor of History at Sora, in Denmark, 1579-1639.

\* *The Leopold Shakespeare*, F. J. Furnivall's Introduction, p. lxx.

† J. A. Heraud's *Shakespeare, His Inner Life*, p. 53.

## SECTION III.

## ON THE DATE OF THE COMPOSITION OF 'HAMLET.'

In the registers of the Stationers' Company, under date 26th July 1602, the following entry occurs in favour of 'James Roberts': 'A Booke, *The Revenge of Hamlett, Prince of Denmark*, as yt latelie was acted by the Lord Chamberlayn his Servants.' The Lord Chamberlain's Servants, after the accession of James I, were by licence dated 17th May 1603, accepted as his 'Highnesse' Servants.' This explains, in part, the title this 'booke' received on its publication, which ran as follows:

‘The  
Tragical Historie of  
Hamlet,  
Prince of Denmark,  
By William Shake-speare,  
As it hath been diverse times acted by his Highnesse' Servants  
in the Cittie of London; as also in the two U-  
niversities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere.  
At London printed for N. L. and John Trundell.  
1603.’

It is quite evident that for some reason or other this edition was not considered a satisfactory one, however the publishers came into possession of it; for we find the James Roberts of the Stationers' Register, and the N. L. of the title-page uniting together to issue a new and better one entitled:

‘The  
Tragical Historie of  
Hamlet,  
Prince of Denmark,  
By William Shakespeare.  
Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much  
againe as it was, according to the true and perfect  
coppie.  
At London  
Printed by J. R. for N. L., and are to be sold at his  
Shoppe under St Dunston's Church in  
Fleetstreet. 1604.’

This edition was reissued in 1605; another issue was noted in the Stationers' Register, 10th November 1607, of which no known copy is extant. Editions of 1609, 1611, and 1637

are also in existence. In 1623 the play appeared as the seventh of the tragedies contained in the collected edition of 'Mr William Shakespeare's comedies, histories, and tragedies.' So far the bibliography of the known published editions of this masterpiece of imagination and intellect takes us ; but this does not satisfy the curiosity of the inquirer into the history of Shakespeare's writings, and therefore our researches must be turned in other directions.

For the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth at Greenwich, 28th February 1587, a play which Langbaine had heard of, but had not seen, entitled the *Misfortunes of Arthur*, published in Hazlitt's *Dodsley's Old Plays*, vol. iv, 249-343, was performed. It was the conjoint work of eight persons : Thomas Hughes, who wrote the body of the play ; William Fulbecke, who composed two speeches introduced at the representation ; Nicholas Trotte, who furnished the introduction ; Francis Flower, who supplied the choruses ; Christopher Yelverton, Francis (afterwards Lord) Bacon, and John Lancaster, who devised the dumb show ; and a person named Penruddock, who directed the proceedings at court as amateur manager. It has been strangely overlooked by the commentators, that 'in the first scene of this play, the spirit of Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall, the man first and most wronged in this history, being despoiled both of wife, dukedom, and life,\* craveth revenge for these injuries.' This ghost comes from the 'Stygian pool,' 'to former light,'

Where proud Pendragon, broiled with shameful lust,  
Despoiled thee erst of wife, of land and life.  
Now, Gorlois, work thy wish, cast here thy gall,  
Glut on revenge. . . . Thy murdered corse,  
And dukedom rest, for heavier vengeance calls.

Leave this to Gorlois' ghost,  
And see where comes one engine of my hate,  
With words and manners fit for my revenge

—I, i, 6-10, etc.

And after the play is closed, this same spirit rehearses the success which had attended his desire for vengeance :

Now, Gorlois, suage thyself; pride hath his pay,  
Murder his price, adultery his desert;  
Treason his meed, disloyalty his doom,  
Wrong has his weak, and guilt his guerdon bears\*

—V, ii, 1-4.

\* Compare 'Of life, of crown, of queen, at once despatched'—*Hamlet*, I, v, 75.

This play, which does not appear to have been acted more than this once, is not likely to have attracted much notice or induced criticism among outsiders. It seems, therefore, that it cannot be *the* play referred to, in which the Ghost cries out, 'Revenge.' If it is not, then is it not likely that the striking part of the ghost had been suggested by a previously acted play in which a spirit appeared for similar purposes?—for amateurs almost always affect attractive effects, and often, as imitators, fail in reproducing the original impression. There seem to us to be echoes from *Hamlet* in the preceding phrases, and hence we infer that the early form of Shakespeare's drama had probably been on the stage early in, if not prior to, 1587.

In the *Opus Theatricum* of Jacob Ayrer, notary and playwright in the imperial German city of Nuremberg, which was published posthumously in 1618, there occurs among its 'thirty extraordinarily beautiful comedies,' so arranged that 'just according to the English manner everything could be acted,' one entitled the *Fratricide's Tragedy*, in which there is so much likeness with difference and difference with likeness, when compared with the English drama of *Hamlet*, that some notice of it becomes requisite. The play is accessible in Cohn's *Shakespeare in Germany*, 1865, in a monograph by Dr R. G. Latham, *On the Hamlet of Saxo Grammaticus and of Shakespeare*, 1872, and in H. H. Furness's *New Variorum Shakespeare*, 'Hamlet,' vol. ii., pp. 114-142. On perusing it, the reader readily perceives that though in the external form of the dramas the difference is considerable, yet in the groundwork of the plot, in the sequence of the scenes, and in the material elements of the dialogue, the agreement is exceedingly close—so close, especially in the more peculiar portions, as to prove that they have not proceeded from a common original, and yet so destitute, in the German play, of the poetical beauty of the English one, as to forbid us from regarding the one as a translation of the other. We know that in Shakespeare's time the English drama exercised a notable influence on the development of the German theatre, which was then largely indebted to the players and playwrights of England for models, stimulation, and impulse. It is well known that bands of English players frequently performed in Germany, and that German playwrights often took their plots from English dramatists, and laid the scenes of their plays in England. It is certain that Jacob Ayrer's drama, *Der Bestrafte Brudermord: oder Prinz Hamlet aus Dännemark* (*The Fratricide's Tragedy*,

or Hamlet, Prince of Denmark), was composed before 1605; for its author died on 26th May of that year. It, however, contains a curious allusion to Portugal, which had interest for England, but not for Germany—an allusion which links itself to George Peele's *Battle of Alcazar* in subject and date, and bears reference to an incident referred to in *As You Like It*, where Rosalind confesses to Celia, 'My love hath an unknown bottom, like the bay of Portugal,' either in regard to the terrible slaughter of 1578 at Alcazar, or of the disastrous expedition undertaken by the Earl of Essex to Portugal in 1589, in which 11,000 persons perished. With a somewhat similar reference, when the King proposes to send Hamlet to England, Ayrer makes the Prince of Denmark reply, 'Ay, ay, king, send me off to Portugal, that I may never come back again.' Besides this, there is a phrase used in the German drama, which, though it does not now appear in the English one, seems, when interpreted, to fix pretty conclusively the question of the original authorship, and inclines us to think 'that the German play is the play of Shakespeare corrupted, attenuated, shorn of its nobility, distorted, degraded, vulgarised,' and adapted. The phrase is this, when 'the first sentinel' tells the second one about the ghostly visitant he has just seen, the latter ridicules him, saying, 'Perhaps you were born on a Sunday, and can see ghosts of all sorts.' It is, at any rate, a curious fact that the generally-accepted birthday of William Shakespeare—23d April 1564—was 'a Sunday,' and that the English belief was that Sunday-born children were more imaginative and precocious than those who were born on the other days of the week. In the German play, as in the first quarto (1603) *Hamlet*, Polonius is called Corambus. These several items help to 'demonstrate thinly' the probability of Shakespeare having been Ayrer's model. When to this we add the fact that there are traces of an early *Hamlet* in English literature—as early, at any rate, as 1589—and that no other author of a *Hamlet* than Shakespeare is known, we have shown the likelihood of this being one of Shakespeare's earliest, as it seems to have been one of his favourite, dramas.

In 'an epistle to the gentlemen students of the two universities,' by Thomas Nash—Shakespeare's senior by two months—prefixed to Robert Greene's novel, *Menaphon*, published at latest in 1589, the following passage occurs: 'It is a common practise now-a-days, among a sort of shifting companions . . . to leave the trade of Noverint, . . . and

busie themselves with the endevours of Arte, that could scarcely Latinize their neck-verse, if they should have neede; yet English Seneca, reade by candell-light, yields many good sentences, as *blood is a beggar*, and so foorth; and if you entreate him faire in a frostie morning, he will affoord you whole Hamlets—I should say, handfuls—of tragical speeches.<sup>1</sup> Henslowe notes that on ‘the 9th of June 1594 he received at Hamlet, viiis.,’ when my Lord Chamberlain’s men (Shakespeare’s company) were performing at Newington Butts. In the *Pedlar’s Prophecy*, a comedy, 1595, these lines occur:

‘O most unhappy Hamlet, country, shire,  
Where such unjust justice have the governance.’

Does the capitalising denote a reference to the play, or was it unintentional, or was the compositor under the unconscious influence, at the time, of ‘Hamlet’ as an actual drama? In *Wil’s Miserie, or the World’s Madnesse*, by Thomas Lodge, 1596, we read of a character’s being ‘a foul lubber, and looks as pale as the vizard of the ghost who cried so miserably at the theatre, “Hamlet, revenge.”’ Steevens says, ‘I have seen a copy of Speght’s edition of Chaucer, which formerly belonged to Dr Gabriel Harvey (the antagonist of Nash), who, in his own handwriting, has set down this play [Hamlet] as a performance with which he was well acquainted in the year 1598. His words are these: “The younger sort take much delight in Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis*, but his *Lucrece* and his tragedy of *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, have it in them to please the wiser sort, 1598.”’\* Dr C. M. Ingleby in his *Shakespeare’s Centurie of Prayse*, p. 361, says, ‘The *Two Angry Women of Abington*, by Henry Porter, 1599, has a trace of *Hamlet*;’ and the subtlety of his taste, as well as the accuracy of his statement, may easily be tested by those who choose to read that drama, which is to be found in Hazlitt’s *Dodsley’s Old Plays*, vol. vii, pp. 261-383. In 1602, in Dekkar’s *Satiro-Mastix*, Captain Tucca cries out, ‘My name’s “Hamlet revenge;”’ and in 1603, as we have seen, *Hamlet* was issued, ‘as it hath beeene diverse times acted by his highnesse’ servants in the cittie of London, as also in the two universities of Cambridge and Oxford. These words did not appear on the title-page without meaning. Nash had twitted Shakespeare as one of those ‘who could scarcely Latinise his neck-verse,’ who possessed only a ‘little country

\* Johnson and Steevens’ *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, third edition, 1785, by Isaac Reed, vol. x, p. 257.

grammar knowledge,' even when alluding to *Hamlet*. Greene, the friend of Nash, spoke sneeringly of Shakespeare, in 1592, as 'an absolute Johannes Factotum—a crow beautified with our feathers,' who thought he could boast out a blank verse with the best of them. Shakespeare issued his *Venus and Adonis*, a poem on a classical subject, and followed it up by his *Lucrece*, as proof that he was not so ignorant as he had been thought, even of classics; and in revising *Hamlet* he takes occasion to express briefly his opinion of Greene's assertion that he had 'beautified' himself with other feathers than his own, by making Polonius say, 'That's an ill phrase—a vile phrase—"beautified" is a vile phrase' (II, ii, 111).

On Wednesday, 8th February 1587, there occurred at Fotheringay Castle an event which must have excited national interest, and recalled strange memories—the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots. The tragedy then consummated had had other tragical scenes preceding it; and the explosion at the House of Kirk of Field, near Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh, on the evening of Sunday, 9th February 1567—twenty years before—when the strangled body of Lord Darnley was found among the ruins, must have been freshened in the minds of every one. Though Mary denied complicity in the murder, she certainly married Bothwell, who was generally regarded as the author of the deed. Thus the immediate past exhibited a suggestive counterpart of the basis of the plot of *Hamlet*. Circumstances also arose about the same time to excite English interest in the history of Denmark.

Frederick II, as we learn from Thomas Heywood's *Apology for Actors*, 1614, 'entertained into his service a company of English players, commanded unto him by the Earl of Leicester,' prior to his death in 1588. Sir Edward Dyer was made ambassador from England to Denmark in 1589, and the regency established to hold rule during the minority of Christian IV gave Danish affairs a European interest. Besides this, the son of Mary Stuart was anxious to ally himself by marriage to the royal family of Denmark: Queen Elizabeth was opposed to the match, and much diplomatic intrigue was exercised to prevent the young king's intent, and it was partly successful. He, at last, succeeded, on 23d November 1589, in gaining as a wife Anne, Princess of Denmark, her sister having previously wedded Duke Henry Julius, of Brunswick, a royal dramatist, the prince who earliest established a regular theatre at his court, and invited English actors to perform in Germany. If a young author wished to

gain a plot for a play, and found from Saxo's narrative that he could place upon Danish ground the scene of a drama, the probability of whose incidents fell within the limits of accepted experience, there was every inducement for him to do so at this time. We might even go further than this, and say that if a drama of any mark, founded on Danish history, was in existence at that time, it would be sure to attract notice, be likely to excite jealousy, and bring about the sneers of those Masters of Arts of both universities who had, like Nash, Greene, and Peele, been the hack writers for the stage. If we suppose that this drama, composed in the rough enthusiasm of youth at Stratford, formed Shakespeare's introduction to that 'fellowship in a cry of players' to which he subsequently attained, we might fancy that the title of his first tragedy and the name of his only son, Hamnet, were not altogether unrelated, especially when we notice that in his will the poet calls that son's godfather Hamlett, though he signs his name, as witness to that will, Hamnet Sadler. Now it is within that period, 1587-9, that we hear first of the *Tragedy of Hamlet*, and close upon that time, in its earliest form, it appears to have been carried into Germany by the English actors who were favourably received in several of the courts of the princes of Germany, by which means Ayrer seems to have gained an outline of the plot at least, and notes of some of the finer passages in it.

So far as the evidence of the editions goes, it is certain that this tragedy has been more frequently altered and revised than any other of the plays of William Shakespeare. The only objection we know to the opinion here expressed is that *Hamlet* is not mentioned in Meres' list of Shakespeare's plays in 1598. But if this play was undergoing revision in that year, Meres may have refrained from mentioning the immature work, especially as he was then only naming examples, not supplying a complete list, of Shakespeare's plays.

Gerald Massey has pointed out that in that year (1598) there was a large eclipse of the moon on 20th February (*new style*), and a large eclipse of the sun, possibly total in some parts of Britain, on March 6th. Two eclipses in a fortnight! the sun and moon darkened as if for the judgment-day! This illustrates the passage, I, i, 110-122, which does not appear in edition 1603, is given in that of 1604, but is omitted in the folio 1623. Why? Shakespeare himself had surpassed the passage about 1600 by the splendid scenes in *Julius Cæsar*, where the same events are described as are here only

alluded to. *Hamlet*, therefore, is probably an early, youthful drama—about 1587-9 at least—in its origin and plot, but one which, as we have it now in its earliest British form, is substantially due to 1598.

It seems to us, in putting all these points together, that we cannot explain the whole facts on any other hypothesis than that *Hamlet* was one of Shakespeare's early, perhaps even youthful, dramas (1587); that it became popular for its story first, but was subsequently revised (1598), and made more poetical and philosophical (1623), as the playwright's excellence in his art increased, till it became the wonderful creation of genius which all educated nations now admire as a supreme work of worth and wisdom.

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## SECTION IV.

### NOTES ON THE DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

'Except in the case of Hamlet himself and his mother, who is called Geruth in the *Hystorie [of Hamblet, 1608]*, there is no resemblance whatever between the names of the characters in the *Hystorie* and in the play.\* Shakespeare had, probably, good dramatic reasons for changing the names appropriated to the *dramatis personæ*, though it may be difficult for us to find these out. It would give some interest to the study of the play to know so much of the characters as would give a guiding idea regarding their names and natures so far as that is possible. The following notes are set before the reader as a contribution to this end.

I. CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark, brother of the preceding king, whom he murdered, and whose crown he usurped, to the injury of his nephew, Hamlet, is, in Saxo's narrative, called Fengon. It is not easy to determine the reason for the adoption of the Roman designation for a Danish sovereign. It is not improbable that some associations regarding the pride, haughtiness, disdain of the laws, and profligacy of life, for which several members of the Claudian *gens* were noted, led Shakespeare's mind to entertain it, and that the remembrance of the fact that Claudius Nero Germanicus married his niece, Agrippina the younger, after the murder of her

\* Clarendon Press *Hamlet*, preface, p. v.

## INTRODUCTION.

husband, fixed him in the design of using it. Two special items in the play seem to give plausibility to this notion : one is, that Marcellus—a name adopted in the play—was that of one of the most illustrious of the plebeian families of the *gens Claudia*; and one of the most noted of the crimes of Nero was his order that his mother Agrippina should be slain. This fact was present to Shakespeare's mind when he composed the play ; for he makes Hamlet pray :

‘O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever  
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom;  
Let me be cruel, not unnatural’—III, ii, 371-373.

‘The king is a most clever actor, always master of his looks and gestures, of his words and actions ; his criminal doings are invariably based upon well-considered, well-appointed plans : he, too, . . . always endeavours to direct the course of events and the development of circumstances, in accordance with his own ideas and designs.’\*

2. HAMLET is formed, Steevens suggests, from *Amlethus*, the name used by Saxo Grammaticus, as the Latinised form of Anlaf, Olaf, or Olaus, by dropping the terminal *us* and transferring the *h* to the beginning. John Ruskin believes that Hamlet is ‘connected in some way with *homely*, the entire event of the tragedy turning on the betrayal of home-duty.’ It may, therefore, have been simply adopted from the name Hamnet or Hamlet, which was common enough in England along the districts where the Danes had settled. Hamnet was the name given to Shakespeare’s only son, whose godfather probably was Hamlet Sadler. The latter form seems to have been the local pronunciation of the former. Dr R. G. Latham believes that ‘the Hamlet of Saxo’s third book is Uffo, as crown prince, who as king becomes Olaus Mansuetus. But Olaus Mansuetus is, as name, much the same as Olaus Tranquillus, which is a recognised translation of Olaf *Kyrre*; which is, combination for combination, the Anglo-Saxon Anlaf *Cwiran*, and the Irish Ambhláibh *Cuaran*. From Ambhláibh,’ he thinks ‘that Amlethus is an admissible transition.’ ‘Now Anlaf *Cwiran* and Ambhláibh *Cuaran* point, beyond doubt, to Olaf, the son of Sihtric.’ ‘The date of Anlaf *Cuaran* is A.D. 950. Then it was that the Anlaf, who is supposed to have taken to himself the personality of Higelac, . . . and out of whose name in

\* Dr Herman Ulrici’s *Shakespeare’s Dramatic Art* (Bohn, 1876), vol. i, p. 496.

the Irish form, *Amlethus*, as a word, is maintained to be an educt, lived, . . . claiming for himself the title of king, both in Northumberland and Ireland.' Dr Latham thinks that Havelock the Dane is the same as Higelac, and that 'the narrative properly due to Higelac has been transferred to Amlethus, and in Saxo's fourth book it is to be found under that name. . . . This means that in the fourth book we may read Higelac for Amlethus.' 'Higelac and Havelock are the same names. It has long been known that the name of Havelock appears in the story of the famous Guy, Earl of Warwick, who, by killing the Norwegian giant, Colbrad, freed Northumberland from its allegiance to the Danes.' 'It must not seem strange that notwithstanding all the associations which connect Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, and a Scandinavian, . . . the result should be that, of all countries in the world, Ireland is the one to which the *Amlethus* of Saxo must be directly referred.\*

'Hamlet is a name;† his speeches and sayings but the idle

\* Dr R. G. Latham's *Two Dissertations on Hamlet*, part i.

† 'Among the multitudes of commentaries on Shakespeare has it ever been hinted that the poet may have conceived his characters of Hamlet from Essex, and Horatio from Southampton? If not, might it not be well to consider the indications which would point to such a conclusion? They are not few, perhaps, whether regard be paid to the external or the personal facts. It will suffice here to suggest a line of inquiry. To the common people, Essex was a prince. He was descended, through his father, from Edward III, and through his mother was the immediate kinsman of Elizabeth. Many persons, most absurdly, imagined his title to the throne a better one than the queen's. In person, for he had his father's beauty, he was all that Shakespeare has described the Prince of Denmark to have been. Then, again, his mother had been tempted from her duty while her gracious and noble husband was alive. That handsome and generous husband was supposed to have been poisoned by the guilty pair. After the father's murder, the seducer had married the mother. That father had not perished in his prime without feeling and expressing some doubts that foul play had been used against him, yet sending his forgiveness to the guilty woman who had sacrificed his honour, perhaps taken away his life. There is indeed singularity of agreement in the facts of the case and the incidents of the play. The relations of Claudio to Hamlet are the same as those of Leicester to Essex; under pretence of fatherly friendship he was suspicious of his motives, jealous of his actions, kept him much in the country and at college, let him see little of his mother, and clouded his prospects in the world by an appear-

coinage of the poet's brain. What then, are they not real? They are as real as our own thoughts. Their reality is in the reader's mind. . . . The character of Hamlet stands quite by itself. It is not a character marked by strength of will or even of passion, but by refinement of thought and sentiment. Hamlet is as little of the hero as a man can well be; but he is a young and princely novice, full of high enthusiasm and quick sensibility, the sport of circumstances, questioning with fortune, and refining on his own feelings, and forced from the habitual bias of his disposition by the stratagems of his situation. . . . He is the prince of philosophical speculators. . . . His ruling passion is to think, not to act. . . . His habitual principles of action are unhinged and out of joint with the time.\* 'In Hamlet Shakespeare seems to have wished to exemplify the moral necessity of a due balance between our attention to the objects of our senses, and our meditation on the workings of our minds—an *equilibrium* between the real and the imaginary worlds. In Hamlet this balance is disturbed; his thoughts and the images of his fancy are far more vivid than his actual perceptions; and his very perceptions, instantly passing through the *medium* of his contemplations, acquire, as they pass, a form and a colour not naturally their own. Hence we see a great, an almost enormous intellectual activity, and a proportionate aversion to real action consequent upon it,

ance of benignant favour. Gertrude's relations with her son were much like those of Lettice to Robert Devereux. Then, again, in his moodiness, in his college bearing, in his love for the theatre and the players, in his desire for the fiery action for which his nature was most unfit, there are many kinds of hints calling up an image of the Danish prince'—*Court and Society from Elizabeth to Anne*, by the Duke of Manchester, vol. i, p. 297. 'The puzzle of history called Essex was well calculated to become that problem of the critic called Hamlet. . . . It strikes me that the subject of Hamlet was forced on Shakespeare as a curious study from the life of his own times rather than chosen from a rude remote age for its dramatic aptitude. For the character is undramatic in its very nature, a passive contemplative part rather than an acting one. It has no "native hue" of Norse "resolution," but is sicklied o'er "with the pale cast" of modern thought. As with Essex, the life is hollow at heart, dramatic only in externals. It is tragic permissively, not compulsorily. The drama does not solve any riddle of life for us, it is the represented riddle of a life that to this day remains unread'—Gerald Massey's *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 485.

\* William Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*.

with all its symptoms and accompanying qualities. This character Shakespeare places in circumstances under which it is obliged to act on the spur of the moment. Hamlet is brave and regardless of death ; but he vacillates from sensibility, and procrastinates from thought, and loses the power of action in the energy of resolve.\*

3. HORATIO.—The friend of Prince Hamlet, an Italian form of the Latin Horatius, which may have been suggested by Shakespeare's memory of the Venusian bard ; for whom friendship and literature had the highest charms, who regarded intercourse with the great as a delight, but scorned to purchase it with unworthy compliances, who yielded his will to his superiors with freedom, or dissented with modesty and self-respect. The type of the familiar friend of a prince and the frequenter of a court who held his mind clear from its baseness. G. Russell French has suggested that Sir Fulke Greville (Lord Brooke) may have given the model frame for this portrait of 'friendship unremoved.'

Mr C. Elliot Browne, however, suggests that 'Horatio is probably the Horatio of the *Spanish Tragedy*, where he plays the rôle of friend and best man to the hero. Andrea calls him "my other soul, my bosom, my heart's friend." The origin of the association is probably to be found in the legend of the Horatii.'

'Horatio is not merely the gentleman and scholar, and therefore worthy to be the companion of Hamlet, but the higher attractions of his honourable nature, his bland and trusting disposition, his prudent mind and steadfastly affectionate heart, have raised him to the highest social rank that man can attain in this world—he is his prince's confidant and bosom friend. The character of Horatio is the spot of sunlight in the play ; and he is a cheering, though not a joyous, gleam coming across the dark hemisphere of treachery, mistrust, and unkindness. . . . In the deportment of Horatio we have the constant recognition of a placid and pensive man, making no protestations, yet constantly prepared for gentle service. . . . As he adhered to his friend through life, so would he have followed him in death, and only consented to survive him that he might redeem his character with the world. . . . When the final catastrophe has ensued, he comes forward and assumes the prerogative of his position, and as the companion and confidant of his prince, he takes his station by Fortinbras and the ambas-

\* Samuel T. Coleridge's *Notes and Lectures on Shakespeare*.

sadors, and at once assumes the office of moral executor and apologist for his friend.\*

4. POLONIUS.—It is not improbable that the name assigned to the chief of the nobles of the Danish court is intended to indicate that he was a Pole by birth, who had entered the civil service of Denmark, and devoted himself to utilising his political skill for his own advancement and the orderly government of his adopted country. Many of the Polish nobility in Shakespeare's time held office in the states of Europe, and were noted for their administrative talent, their acquirements, and their official zeal. It may be, however, that in imaging to his own mind the character of the Prime Minister of Denmark, the father of Laertes and Ophelia, and the main agent in the peaceful accession of Claudius, Shakespeare had in his mind also the Greek Πολωνός, 'full of wise speech and lore,' and had resolved on exhibiting a Ulysses of culture. 'Polonius is,' as Dr Johnson said, 'a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident in his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. His mode of oratory is truly represented as designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental, the rest is natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once strong, and knows not that it has become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in the particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight. While he depends upon his memory, and can draw upon his repositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences, and gives useful counsel; but as the mind in its enfeebled state cannot be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to sudden dereliction of his faculties, he loses the order of his ideas, and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recovers the leading principle, and falls again into his former train.' Sydney W. Walker suggests that Polonius, from his studied rhetorical speeches, probably received his name by corruption from Apollonius, the name of several ancient teachers of the art of speaking.

'Polonius,' as the late George Dawson used to say, 'has always been, at first sight, a puzzle—so foolish at one time, so apparently wise at another; such a silly, garrulous, old man, and yet laying down maxims which all the world has

\* Charles Cowden Clarke's *Shakespeare Characters*, pp. 75-77.

agreed to quote as the best rules for a young man in life. Coleridge has harmonised these things by telling us that Polonius was a man of maxims, never of ideas ; where the thing was a matter of experience he was great, but when it was a matter of prescience he was very foolish ; for Coleridge notes that a maxim is very different from an idea—it is dead matter, like the sum-total at the bottom of a number of items. Your maxim can only serve like a foot-rule, while an idea is a generating principle that enables us to prophesy. Polonius never had an idea, and never could have had one ; he had maxims beautiful and true, and laws warranted to apply to cases which he had tried ; but a constructive thought—something which, carried with us, shall develop itself into a law, as circumstances demand—he had not ; therefore, where experience carried him, he is wise ; where rule of thumb had not taken him, he is a fool—“full of wise saws and modern instances.”\* ‘Polonius, the petrifaction of morality, the monument of commonplace, . . . the echo of ancient wisdom, . . . the treasury of gabbling aphorisms, the sublime of stupidity ! Polonius is not the little, old, dried-up greybeard. . . . He is solemn, he speaks slowly, he steps squarely. He is dignified, he is official, he is sure of himself.’†

5. LAERTES was the name of the King of Ithaca, the father of Ulysses, who took part in the Calydonian hunt and the expedition of the Argonauts, and survived the fall of Troy. Perhaps as Homer calls him ‘the old hero Laertes’ (*Odyssey*, i, 189), we must look for the originating suggestion of the name elsewhere. It is sufficiently curious to deserve notice that *Laertes* is the name given in the *Historia Naturalis* of Ælian, x, 42, to a kind of *ant*. When we remember that Shakespeare places the character and deportment of Laertes in express contrast to those of Hamlet, may we not, as it were, overhear the author saying to his dilatory hero, ‘We’ll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there is no labouring in the winter’ (*King Lear*, II, iv, 67, 68). And in this way we may have gained the secret of the choice of this Greek name.

‘Laertes is the cultured young gentleman of the period. He is accomplished, chivalric, gallant ; but the accomplishments are superficial, the chivalry theatrical, the gallantry of a showy kind. He is master of events up to a certain

\* *Notes of a Lecture delivered in 1850.*

† M. Philarète Chasles’ *Etudes Contemporaines*, 1867, p. 97.

point, because he sees their coarse, gaudy, superficial significance. It is his part to do fine things, and make fine speeches ; to enter the king's presence, gallantly demanding atonement for his father's murder ; to leap into his sister's grave and utter a theatrical rant of sorrow. . . . No overweight of thought, no susceptibility of conscience, retard the action of the young gallant. . . . Laertes has been no student of philosophic Wittenberg. The French capital, "so dear to the average, sensual man," is Laertes' school of education.\*

6, 7. VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.—Courtiers of Denmark, sent as ambassadors to Norway ; the name of the latter, connected with *cornu*, a horn, indicates firmness, hardihood, one distinguished by bravery ; that of the former, derived from *volutus*, a countenance, and *mando*, to confide, may be taken to signify Trusty-face.

8, 9. ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.—These names actually appear in the List of the Council of Regency, 1588, who held the governing power in Denmark during the minority of Christian IV, brother of Anne of Denmark, wife of James I. They do not appear in Ayrer's German adaptation of the prototype play of *Hamlet*; but they have a place in the 1603 quarto, as Gilderstone and Rosencraft. They are walking gentlemen of the Gold-Stick-in-Waiting order, inseparables in their diplomatic duplicity. 'They are,' as Professor E. Dowden says, 'six of the one and half-a-dozen of the other. With no tie of friendship or capacity for true human comradeship, the companions hunt in couples, and they go with the same indistinguishable smirking and bowing to their fate in England.'† 'The poet has sketched them in few and bold outlines ; their subtleties of character stare out like the bones of a starved beast. They are time-servers by profession, and upon hire.'‡ Like the 'fortemque Gyan forte-temque Cloanthum' of Virgil, the same term couples and describes them :

‘King. Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.  
Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz’  
—II, ii, 33, 34.

Their names signify Rose-wreath and Goldenstar.

10. OSRIC is a specimen of the foppish gallants of Queen Elizabeth's court, who affected the style of language called

\* Professor E. Dowden's *Shakespeare, His Mind and Art*, p. 137.

† *Shakespeare's Mind and Art*, p. 151.

‡ Cowden Clarke's *Shakespeare Characters*, p. 84.

*Euphuism* (from William Lyly's *Euphues and his England*, 1579). The vapid pliancy and the choice language and peculiar idiom of the dandy lord give special aptness to Hamlet's designation of him—the *gilded* waterfly. 'Who that has ever observed the action of that peculiar insect-skimming to and fro and round and round upon the water's face, with no apparent purpose but mere inconsequence, can fail to recognise the aptitude of that' term to indicate the manikin man, the nullity of the court, the insipid *petit maître* of fashion, the umpire of frivolities, and the arbiter of the elegancies of society.

*Osrīc* etymologically signifies *Divine rule*, though we might almost be tempted to regard it as a satirical hybrid, meaning *mouth-power*. C. E. Browne says: 'This was a name well known at the time. Henslowe's company performed an *Oserych*, 1597, perhaps Heywood's lost play of *Marshal Osrick*.

11. MARCELLUS was, as we have noted above, the name of the most illustrious of the plebeian families of the Claudian *gens*. It had also been made sacred to poetry in that beautiful passage of Virgil's *Aeneid*, vi, 860-886, devoted to the embalming of the memory of the son of Augustus and Octavia, B.C. 23. Marcellus, according to Camden, is a name 'martiall and warlike' from Mars, and therefore suitable for a military man. But we may also place on record the fact that Owen, the epigrammatist, characterised Sir Philip Sidney as 'the Marcellus of the English nation'; and Nat Lee, speaking of that notable soldier, patriot, poet, and scholar, says, 'I have paid just veneration to his name, and methinks the spirit of Shakespeare pushed the commendation.' It may only be a coincidence, but, like the early-dying Marcellus of Virgil and Sir Philip Sidney, the part of Marcellus in the drama is soon played out, for he only appears in scenes i, ii, iv, and v of Act I.

12, 13. BERNARDO and FRANCISCO.—'The names of Bernardo and Francisco, associated together in this play, had been previously associated in one of the greatest crimes of the fifteenth century. Bernardo Bandini and Francisco di Pazzi were the assassins of Giuliano di Medici in the cathedral of Florence [1478].'\*

14. REYNALDO.—Probably like the steward in *All's Well that Ends Well*, who is called Rinaldo by the countess in the play, this name is derived from the Rinaldo of the romantic

\* C. Elliot Browne in *Athenaeum*, 29th July 1876.

tales of Italy and France. ‘The best known of the historical Rinaldos—and several probably went to the composition of the Rinaldo of romance—was high steward to Louis the Pious.’ There seems, however, from the spelling to be an importation of the fox, *Reynardo*, introduced into this name.

Perhaps this had come to be a common nickname for a Dane in Shakespeare’s day—or have we here another early *Hamlet* reference?—for, in Samuel Rowland’s *Looke to It, For Ile Stabbe Ye*, 1604, we have ‘You will drink Reynaldo unto death; the Dane that wold carowse out of his boote.’\*

15. FORTINERAS.—French *Fortenbras*, a compound name having the same meaning as Strong-i’-the-arm, or Armstrong, indicating prowess in fight.

Dr R. G. Latham, in *Athenæum*, 1872, speaks of this name as a corrupt French form, equivalent to *Fierumbras* or *Fierabras*, which is a derivative from *Ferri brachium*, Iron-arm. ‘It may have come,’ C. Elliot Browne thinks, ‘directly from Niccolo Fortebraccio, the famous leader of the Condottieri,’ or it might have its original in Sir Ferumbras, the hero of the old romance of the same name.

‘Fortinbras represents that firm and self-possessed power of action which always takes into consideration the prevailing circumstances, but is active nevertheless, and alone succeeds in attaining its ends. For this reason the poet introduces him at the very commencement—even though in the background—and does not lose sight of him till he takes up his position in front as the representative of the future.’†

I. GERTRUDE is usually held to signify *all-truth*. Miss C. M. Yonge regards it as a Valkyr name for *spear-maid*. She is called Geruth in the old *Hystorie*, and probably Shakespeare took this as its equivalent or representative. Neither signification seems to have had any influence in its adoption, though our poet probably knew the latter derivation. *See note, IV, v, 40.*

The queen is the weakling of passion. In her the sensuous sensibility had passed into sensuality. She had drifted from the moorings of morality, and let temptation trifle with right and duty. Inclination governed her. Her wickedness is almost passive and negative. She does not seek sin, but when it comes she does not resist it; she yields—yields with

\* Hunterian Club edition, p. 21.

† *Shakespeare’s Dramatic Art*, by Ulrici, vol. i, p. 499.

\* strange unconsciousness that there can be anything wrong in the course she takes. She never feels her sinfulness, she is only occasionally irked by the consequences of her transgressions. Even Hamlet's remonstrances cannot awake her to a sense of guilt ; they only stir her fears awhile. She puts aside with quiet complacency the opportunity of repentance, and death overtakes her in her callousness of soul.

In 1796 the Rev. James Plumptre, M.A., published '*Observations on Hamlet*, and on the motives which most probably induced Shakespeare to fix upon the Story of Amleth, from the Danish Chronicle of Saxo Grammaticus, for the plot of that Tragedy ; being an attempt to prove that he designed it as an indirect censure on Mary Queen of Scots.' This was followed, in 1797, by an *Appendix*, containing some further arguments in support of this hypothesis, and the author subsequently wrought out his supposition with great research and ingenuity. Karl Silberschlag advocated the same idea in Germany, in the *Morgenblatt*, Nos. 46 and 47, 1861 ; and the Rev. C. E. Moberly, in *Hamlet*, Rugby edition, inclines to the same view.

II. OPHELIA.—The name Ophelia is a literal reproduction of the Greek word ὄφελλα, which occurs in the *Andromache* of Euripides, line 539, as *help, aid, assistance*, and may be regarded as adopted from the Greek as an equivalent for the Bible term first used in regard to woman, 'an help meet' for man (*Gen.* ii, 18, 20). This word, however, was not first used by Shakespeare as a female proper name, for it occurs in the Italian pastoral romance, *Arcadia* (ecl. ix), by Sannazzaro, published 1502, of which upwards of sixty editions have been issued.

Miss Yonge conjectures that Ophelia's name is a Greek rendering of the old Danish serpent-name, Ormilda. C. Elliot Browne says, 'It is probably only a modern form of the Roman Osella, Horace's Ofellus ;' but in his *Munera Pulveris*, John Ruskin supports the above view, saying, 'Ophelia, Serviceableness, the true lost wife of Hamlet, is marked as having a Greek name, by that of her brother Laertes ; and its signification is once exquisitely alluded to in that brother's last word of her, where her gentle preciousness is opposed to the uselessness of the churlish clergy :

"A ministering angel shall my sister be,  
When thou liest howling."

—V, i, 225, 226; p. 126 (1872).

'Ophelia is one of those meditative, dreamily-reserved

female natures, with deep feelings and a sensitive imagination, but with no acuteness of intellect and clear self-consciousness, which are therefore incapable of expressing what affects them ; they live only in their own hearts, and, so to say, upon their own hearts.'\* George Dawson, in a lecture delivered about 1850, characterised Ophelia as 'the perfection of sensuousness, with very little inward energy or strength of mind. She possessed a sensuous as distinguished from a sensual nature—of which latter the queen was the type—but the one was always trembling on the balance towards the other. She was animal handsomeness nearly perfect, fair and lovable, but not able to hold a high nature long bound to her by her mental attractions. She was intensely pure, though we see through the rent veil of madness the thoughts which she had kept at full arm's length off during sanity affecting her speech. Only in her madness did the touch of temptation sully the peach-like bloom of her sweet innocency.'†

'One wonders whether either of the Court ladies—Elizabeth Southwell, Mary Howard, Mrs Russell, or the "fairest Brydges"—whose names have been coupled with that of Essex, gave any hint of Ophelia to Shakespeare'—Gerald Massey's *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 480.

G. R. French says the following personages are believed to be indicated by certain names in the play : Sir Henry Sidney, 'the elder Hamlet'; Sir Philip Sidney, 'young Hamlet'; Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon, Claudius; Polonius, Laertes, and Ophelia—Sir William Cecil (Lord Burleigh), Robert Cecil, and Anne Cecil; Horatio, Hubert Languet; Marcellus and Bernardo, Fulke Greville and Sir Edward Dyer; Francisco, Gabriel Harvey; Fortinbras, the Earl of Essex. He, however, would appropriate Horatio to Fulke Greville, Marcellus to Sir Edward Dyer—See 'Notes on Hamlet,' *Genealogica Shakespeariana*, 299-310.

According to Plumptre and Silberschlag, Claudius is Bothwell; Gertrude, Mary Queen of Scots; Hamlet, James I; the Ghost, Henry Lord Darnley; Polonius (in some points), David Rizzio, and (in others), Dr Wotton, the ambassador from England to Scotland.

\* Ulrici's *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*, vol. i, p. 497.

† See further on 'The Character of Ophelia,' Mrs Jameson's *Characteristics of Women*, pp. 174-193; and a most excellent critique on that admirable work by John Wilson (Christopher North) in *Blackwood's Magazine*, January to June 1833.

## THE ARGUMENT.

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'THE whole realm of Denmark was thrown into dismay by the sudden death of its monarch. The good king, Hamlet—so it was reported—while sleeping, as was his afternoon wont, in the orchard which formed part of the palace grounds, had been stung by a serpent ; and from the venom inflicted by the wound, he had instantly sickened and died. Ere the nation could recover from its consternation, and while the rightful heir to the throne was plunged in filial grief, Claudius [the late king's brother] seized the crown and caused himself to be proclaimed king. So artfully had all his plans been laid, so resolutely and so promptly did he carry them all out, that he established his claims to the succession, or rather fixed himself firmly in the possession of his usurped dominion, before the public voice, on behalf of its lawful prince, could be upraised to dispute his pretensions. Scarcely had this first bold step been securely taken, than it was followed by the solemnity of coronation, and, shortly after, by the ceremonial of marriage between the reigning monarch and his late brother's widow. The habitual acquiescence with which royal proceedings are for the most part regarded by the populace, could hardly restrain the expressions of amazement and dissatisfaction which these events excited. But these occurred in such rapid succession, were carried with so high a hand, and were executed so peremptorily, that they passed without open murmurs, without attempted opposition.\*

Claudius, who knew the full effect of pomp and ostentation in dazzling the public eye, omitted no circumstance that could blind the judgment. The rumour of the surpassing magnificence of the ceremonies that had taken place at the Danish court had been circulated far and wide, and many had come from a distance to witness the gorgeous festivities. Among these were Horatio, fellow-pupil of Prince Hamlet, from Wittemberg, in Saxony ; and Laertes, son of the chief minister of Denmark, who had come from France. While the new court was still in the fresh flush of these ceremonials, a report reached the ear of young Hamlet that an apparition resembling his dead father had been seen by the soldiers upon guard on the platform of the palace at midnight. He, amazed at this intelligence, resolved to take his stand with Marcellus, one of the guard, and his friend Horatio, the next midnight. They did so,

\* Mary C. Clarke's *Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines*, vol. ii, p. 223.

His father's spirit appeared, disclosed the murder that had been committed, and charged Hamlet to avenge it against his unnatural brother, but not to do anything against his mother. Hamlet promised obedience, and the ghost vanished. Hamlet's friends who had been seriously afraid lest any harm should come to the prince through this supernatural visitant, soon appeared and found him dispirited and unhinged in mind. He besought them to keep this event secret, and they swore to do so. From this time Hamlet affected a certain wildness and strangeness in his apparel, speech, and behaviour, and so counterfeited madness that he deceived the king and queen. He had previously loved Ophelia, daughter of the prime minister, Polonius; but with this burden of revenge laid on him, he felt he could no longer dally with the innocence of love, and he determined to break with her, and did so. His mother and Claudius, informed of this circumstance by the old statesman, believed, at first, that the true cause of his madness was his love for Ophelia. But the malady lay far deeper, and was of a different nature. His imagination was haunted by the visitation of the apparition, and the duty it had imposed on him. He could not, however, help thinking that there might be some delusion in regard to it, and he wished to be certain. While he was in this irresolute state, some players came to the court, and he got them to agree to perform a play before the king and queen, which might cause the former to betray his hidden guilt. The story of this play was of a murder done in Venice, by Lucianus, on his brother Gonzago, the duke, who shortly thereafter gained the love of his brother's widow. The king was conscience-stricken at the play, and, starting up terrified, retired from the representation. Hamlet was then perfectly satisfied that the ghost had told him the truth, and was thereupon strongly moved to take instant vengeance. He was, however, just at that moment summoned to a private conference with the queen in her own room. This had been done at the desire of the king, on the suggestion of Polonius, who had undertaken to ensconce himself behind the arras in the queen's closet, that he might hear what he said to his mother, and should so learn how much Hamlet knew of the means by which the crown had been gained. Hamlet, in passing toward the queen's room, saw the king in his bedroom kneeling and praying, and would instantly have killed him; but that he thought if he slew him then, he would really not be revenging the murderer, but benefiting the sinner by sending him to his account while in a repentant mood; at least so he fashioned the excuse for inaction to his own mind. On entering his mother's apartment, she began to rebuke him for giving offence to his father. He, indignant at this name being applied to his father's murderer, spoke angrily. She was afraid, and thinking he was really mad, cried out for help. Polonius called from his hiding-place, 'Help, the queen!' and Hamlet, thinking it was the king who was there, thrust his sword into the arras and killed Polonius. Hamlet then spoke to his mother plainly of the great crime which had been done, and the

impropriety of her conduct in becoming consort to her husband's murderer. While Hamlet was doing so, the apparition entered the chamber to remind him of the revenge he had undertaken, and to counsel kindness to his mother. She promised to Hamlet that she would remember his advice, and the conference ended. Then Hamlet, taking the body of Polonius up, carried it away, greatly grieving that through him, although unwittingly, the father of Ophelia had been slain.

The king used the death of Polonius as a pretence for sending Hamlet from Denmark to England, under the care of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, by whom he despatched letters to the English court, requesting that the prince should be put to death as soon as he landed in that country. In the night-time Hamlet secretly got hold of these letters, erased his own name, inserted the names of his two companions, and thereupon sealed them up again. The ship was almost immediately attacked by pirates; Hamlet boarded the enemy's vessel, and the ship which he had left bore away, indifferent to his fate—the courtiers being thus carried to deserved destruction. The pirates, appreciating the prince's valour, and hoping he might yet do them a good turn at court, set him ashore as near to Denmark as they dared. Thence he wrote to the king an account of what had occurred, and announced his intended return to Elsinore.

In the meanwhile, Ophelia, distracted by despised love, and at her father's death, having come to a brook in the royal gardens, and wishing to hang some flowers on a willow there, fell into the water and was drowned. Laertes, who had returned from Paris, enraged at the slaughter of his father, and eager to excite a revolution against the king, received the news of her death with mingled feelings of sorrow and resentment. During the obsequies of Ophelia—at which Laertes was chief mourner, and the king, the queen, and the whole court were present—Hamlet arrived. He stood aside—knowing nothing of whose funeral it was—to allow the ceremony to proceed. On learning, however, that it was Ophelia, who had been laid to rest, he discovered himself, leaped into the grave, where Laertes was, proclaimed his love for her, and though Laertes, frantic with rage and grief, grappled with and would have strangled him, he besought his forgiveness. But the king set on Laertes, under cover of reconciliation, to challenge Hamlet to a trial of skill at fencing, which Hamlet accepted. Laertes had his foil, not blunted but poisoned, and after a few passes wounded Hamlet, who in the next scuffle gained Laertes' envenomed weapon, and thrust home at him. At this instant the queen shrieked out that she was dying. She had drank from a bowl into which the king had dropped some deadly poison. Hamlet ordered the doors to be shut; Laertes, who felt his fatal wound, confessed his guilt and revealed the king's treachery. Hamlet turned on his false uncle and slew him, and—after having besought Horatio to be his friend still, and transmit a true account of this strange tragedy to posterity—died.

## PERSONS REPRESENTED.\*

**CLAUDIUS,** *King of Denmark.*

**HAMLET,** *Son to the former King, and Nephew to CLAUDIUS.*

**HORATIO,** *Friend to HAMLET.*

**POLONIUS,** *Lord Chamberlain.*

**LAERTES,** *Son to POLONIUS.*

**VOLTIMAND,**

**CORNELIUS,**

**ROSENCRANTZ,**

**GULDENSTERN,**

**OSRIC,**

**MARCELLUS,**

**BERNARDO,**

**FRANCISCO,** *a Soldier.*

**REYNALDO,** *Servant to POLONIUS.*

**FORTINBRAS,** *Prince of Norway.*

**Ghost of HAMLET's Father.**

**A Gentleman.**

**A Priest.**

**Players.**

**Two Clowns, *Grave-diggers.***

**English Ambassadors.**

**A Captain.**

**GERTRUDE,** *Queen of Denmark, and Mother of HAMLET.*

**OPHELIA,** *Daughter to POLONIUS.*

**Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.**

**SCENE—ELSINOE,** except in IV, iv, where it is ‘a plain in Denmark, near the sea-shore.’†

\* The list of *dramatis personæ* was first prefixed to the play in Rowe's edition, 1709. It is not found in the quartos or folios.

† The early quartos and folios contain no indication of the place of each scene. In the early quartos the play is not divided into acts and scenes. This division was first made in the folio 1623, and even in it this is only carried as far as II, ii.

# HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.

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## ACT I.

SCENE I.—ELSINORE. *A Platform before the Castle.*

FRANCISCO at his Post. Enter to him BERNARDO.

Ber. Who's there?

Fran. Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold Yourself.

Ber. Long live the king!

Fran. Bernardo?

Ber.

He.

Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

Fran. For this relief much thanks: 'tis bitter cold, 5  
And I am sick at heart.

Ber. Have you had quiet guard?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring.

Ber. Well, good-night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,  
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste. 10

Fran. I think I hear them.—Stand, ho! Who is there?

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.

Fran. Give you good-night.

Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier:

Who hath reliev'd yo'

Fran. Bernardo has my place.

Give you good-night,

[Exit.]

Mar.

Iolla! Bernardo!

Ber.

Say.

What, is Horatio there?

15

*Hor.* A piece of him.

*Ber.* Welcome, Horatio:—welcome, good Marcellus.

*Mar.* What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

*Ber.* I have seen nothing.

*Mar.* Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,

20

And will not let belief take hold of him

Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us:

Therefore I have entreated him, along

With us, to watch the minutes of this night;

That, if again this apparition come,

25

He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

*Hor.* Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

*Ber.* Sit down awhile;

And let us once again assail your ears,

That are so fortified against our story,

What we two nights have seen.

*Hor.* Well, sit we down,

30

And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

*Ber.* Last night of all,

When yon same star that's westward from the pole

Had made his course to illume that part of heaven

Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

35

The bell then beating one,—

*Mar.* Peace, break thee off; look where it comes again!

*Enter Ghost, armed.*

*Ber.* In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

*Mar.* Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

*Ber.* Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

40

*Hor.* Most like:—it harrows me with fear and wonder.

*Ber.* It would be spoke to.

*Mar.* Question it, Horatio.

*Hor.* What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,

Together with that fair and warlike form

In which the majesty of buried Denmark

Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!

45

*Mar.* It is offended.

*Ber.* See, it stalks away!

*Hor.* Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

[*Exit Ghost.*

*Mar.* 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

*Ber.* How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:

50

Is not this something more than fantasy?

What think you on't?

*Hor.* Before my God, I might not this believe

Without the sensible and true avouch  
Of mine own eyes.

*Mar.* Is it not like the king?

55

*Hor.* As thou art to thyself:  
Such was the very armour he had on  
When he the ambitious Norway combated;  
So frown'd he once when, in an angry parle,  
He smote the sledged Polacks on the ice.

60

'Tis strange.

*Mar.* Thus twice before, and just at this dread hour,  
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

*Hor.* In what particular thought to work I know not;  
But, in the gross and scope of my opinion,

65

This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

*Mar.* Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,  
Why this same strict and most observant watch  
So nightly toils the subject of the land;  
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,  
And foreign mart for implements of war;

70

Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task  
Does not divide the Sunday from the week;  
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste  
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:

75

Who is't that can inform me?

*Hor.* That can I;  
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,  
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,  
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,  
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,

80

Dar'd to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet,—  
For so this side of our known world esteem'd him,—  
Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd compact,  
Well ratified by law and heraldry,

Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands,  
Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror:

85

Against the which, a moiety competent  
Was gaged by our king; which had return'd  
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,

Had he been vanquisher; as by the same cov'nant,  
And carriage of the article design'd,  
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,  
Of unimproved mettle hot and full,  
Hath in the skirts of Norway, here and there,  
Shark'd up a list of landless resolutes,

90

For food and diet, to some enterprise

95

That hath a stomach in't: which is no other,—  
As it doth well appear unto our state,—  
But to recover of us by strong hand,  
And terms compulsative, those foresaid lands  
So by his father lost: and this, I take it,  
Is the main motive of our preparations,  
The source of this our watch, and the chief head  
Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

100

*Ber.* I think it be no other, but e'en so:  
Well may it sort, that this portentous figure  
Comes armed through our watch; so like the king  
That was and is the question of these wars.

105

*Hor.* A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.  
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,  
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead  
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets:  
As, stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,  
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star,  
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,  
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse:  
And even the like precurse of fierce events,—  
As harbingers preceding still the fates,  
And prologue to the omen coming on,—  
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
Unto our climation and countrymen.—  
But, soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!

110

115

120

*Re-enter Ghost.*

I'll cross it, though it blast me.—Stay, illusion!  
If thou hast any sound or use of voice,

125

Speak to me:

If there be any good thing to be done,  
That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,

Speak to me:

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,  
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,  
O, speak!

130

Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life  
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,  
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,

135

[Cock crows.]

Speak of it:—stay, and speak!—Stop it, Marcellus.

*Mar.* Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

*Hor.* Do, if it will not stand.

*Ber.*

'Tis here!

*Hor.*

'Tis here!

*Mar.* 'Tis gone!

[Exit Ghost.

We do it wrong, being so majestical,

140

To offer it the show of violence;

For it is, as the air, invulnerable,

And our vain blows malicious mockery.

*Ber.* It was about to speak when the cock crew.*Hor.* And then it started like a guilty thing

145

Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,

The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,

Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat

Awake the god of day; and at his warning,

Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,

150

The extravagant and erring spirit hies

To his confine: and of the truth herein

This present object made probation.

*Mar.* It faded on the crowing of the cock.

Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes

155

Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,

The bird of dawning singeth all night long:

And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad;

The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,

No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm;

160

So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

*Hor.* So have I heard, and do in part believe it.

But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,

Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill:

Break we our watch up: and, by my advice,

165

Let us impart what we have seen to-night

Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,

This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him:

Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,

As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

170

*Mar.* Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know

Where we shall find him most conveniently.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II.—ELSINORE. *A Room of State in the Castle.**Enter the KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES,  
VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants.**King.* Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
The memory be green; and that it us befitted

To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom  
 To be contracted in one brow of woe ;  
 Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature      5  
 That we with wisest sorrow think on him,  
 Together with remembrance of ourselves.  
 Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,  
 The imperial jointress of this warlike state,  
 Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,—      10  
 With one auspicious and one dropping eye,  
 With mirth and funeral, and with dirge in marriage,  
 In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—  
 Taken to wife : nor have we herein barr'd  
 Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone      15  
 With this affair along :—for all, our thanks.  
 Now follows that you know, young Fortinbras,  
 Holding a weak supposal of our worth,  
 Or thinking by our late dear brother's death  
 Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,      20  
 Colleagu'd with the dream of his advantage,  
 He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,  
 Importing the surrender of those lands  
 Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,  
 To our most valiant brother. So much for him.—      25  
 Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting :  
 Thus much the business is :—we have here writ  
 To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—  
 Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears  
 Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress      30  
 His further gait herein ; in that the levies,  
 The lists, and full proportions, are all made  
 Out of his subject :—and we here despatch  
 You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,  
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway ;      35  
 Giving to you no further personal power  
 To business with the king more than the scope  
 Of these dilated articles allow.  
 Farewell ; and let your haste command your duty.

*Cor. and Vol.* In that and all things will we show our duty.  
*King.* We doubt it nothing : heartily farewell.      41  
 [Exeunt VOL. and COR  
 And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?  
 You told us of some suit ; what is't, Laertes ?  
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,  
 And lose your voice : what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,      45  
 That shall not be my offer, not thy asking ?

The head is not more native to the heart,  
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,  
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.  
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

*Laer.* Dread my lord, 50  
Your leave and favour to return to France;  
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,  
To show my duty in your coronation;  
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,  
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France, 55  
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

*King.* Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?  
*Pol.* He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave  
By laboursome petition; and at last  
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent: 60  
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

*King.* Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,  
And thy best graces, spend it at thy will!—  
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

*Ham.* [aside.] A little more than kin, and less than kind. 66  
*King.* How is it that the clouds still hang on you?  
*Ham.* Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.  
*Queen.* Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,  
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.  
Do not for ever with thy vailed lids  
Seek for thy noble father in the dust: 70  
Thou know'st 'tis common,—all that live must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity.

*Ham.* Ay, madam, it is common.  
*Queen.* If it be,  
Why seems it so particular with thee? 75  
*Ham.* Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not seems.  
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye, 80  
Nor the dejected 'aviour of the visage,  
Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief,  
That can denote me truly: these, indeed, seem;  
For they are actions that a man might play:  
But I have that within which passeth show; 85  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

*King.* 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,  
To give these mourning duties to your father:  
But, you must know, your father lost a father:

That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound,	90
In filial obligation, for some term	
To do obsequious sorrow: but to persevere	
In obstinate condolment is a course	
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief:	
It shows a will most incorrect to Heaven;	95
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient;	
An understanding simple and unschool'd:	
For what we know must be, and is as common	
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,	
Why should we, in our peevish opposition,	100
Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to Heaven,	
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,	
To reason most absurd; whose common theme	
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,	
From the first corse till he that died to-day,	105
<i>This must be so.</i> We pray you throw to earth	
This unprevailing woe; and think of us	
As of a father: for let the world take note	
You are the most immediate to our throne;	
And with no less nobility of love	110
Than that which dearest father bears his son	
Do I impart toward you. For your intent	
In going back to school in Wittenberg,	
It is most retrograde to our desire:	
And we beseech you bend you to remain	115
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,	
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.	
<i>Queen.</i> Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:	
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.	
<i>Ham.</i> I shall in all my best obey you, madam.	120
<i>King.</i> Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:	
Be as ourself in Denmark.—Madam, come;	
This gentle and unforcd' accord of Hamlet	
Sits smiling to my heart; in grace whereof,	
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day	125
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell;	
And the king's rouse the heavens shall bruit again,	
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.	
<i>[Exeunt all but HAMLET.]</i>	
<i>Ham.</i> O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,	
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!	130
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd	
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!	
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable	

Seem to me all the uses of this world !  
 Fie on't ! O fie ! 'tis an unweeded garden,  
 That grows to seed ; things rank and gross in nature  
 Possess it merely. That it should come to this !  
 But two months dead !—nay, not so much, not two :  
 So excellent a king ; that was, to this,  
 Hyperion to a satyr : so loving to my mother,  
 That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth !  
 Must I remember ? why, she would hang on him  
 As if increase of appetite had grown  
 By what it fed on : and yet, within a month,—  
 Let me not think on't,—Frailty, thy name is woman !—  
 A little month ; or ere those shoes were old  
 With which she follow'd my poor father's body,  
 Like Niobe, all tears ;—why she, even she,—  
 O God ! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,  
 Would have mourn'd longer,—married with mine uncle,  
 My father's brother ; but no more like my father  
 Than I to Hercules : within a month ;  
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
 Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,  
 She married :—O, most wicked speed, to post  
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets !  
 It is not, nor it cannot come to good ;  
 But break, my heart,—for I must hold my tongue !

*Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.*

*Hor.* Hail to your lordship !  
*Ham.* I am glad to see you well : 160  
 Horatio,—or I do forget myself.  
*Hor.* The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.  
*Ham.* Sir, my good friend ; I'll change that name with you.  
 And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio ?—  
*Marcellus?* 165  
*Mar.* My good lord,—  
*Ham.* I am very glad to see you.—Good even, sir.—  
 But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg ?  
*Hor.* A truant disposition, good my lord.  
*Ham.* I would not hear your enemy say so ; 170  
 Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,  
 To make it truster of your own report  
 Against yourself : I know you are no truant.  
 But what is your affair in Elsinore ?  
 We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart. 175

*Hor.* My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

*Ham.* I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student; I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

*Hor.* Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon't.

*Ham.* Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd-meats 180

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

Ere I had ever seen that day, Horatio!—

My father,—methinks I see my father.

*Hor.* Oh! where, my lord?

*Ham.* In my mind's eye, Horatio. 185

*Hor.* I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

*Ham.* He was a man, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again.

*Hor.* My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

*Ham.* Saw who?

190

*Hor.* My lord, the king your father.

*Ham.* The king my father!

*Hor.* Season your admiration for awhile

With an attent ear, till I may deliver,

Upon the witness of these gentlemen,

This marvel to you.

*Ham.* For God's love, let me hear.

195

*Hor.* Two nights together had these gentlemen,

Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,

In the dead vast and middle of the night,

Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,

Arm'd at all points exactly, cap-à-pé,

200

Appears before them, and with solemn march

Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd

By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,

Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd

Almost to jelly with the act of fear,

205

Stand dumb, and speak not to him. This to me

In dreadful secrecy impart they did;

And I with them the third night kept the watch:

Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,

Form of the thing, each word made true and good,

210

The apparition comes: I knew your father;

These hands are not more like.

*Ham.* But where was this?

*Mar.* My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

*Ham.* Did you not speak to it?

*Hor.* My lord, I did;

*But answer made it none: yet once methought*

215

It lifted up its head, and did address  
Itself to motion, like as it would speak :  
But even then the morning cock crew loud,  
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,  
And vanish'd from our sight.

*Ham.* 'Tis very strange. 220

*Hor.* As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true ;  
And we did think it writ down in our duty  
To let you know of it.

*Ham.* Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.  
Hold you the watch to-night ?

*Mar. and Ber.* We do, my lord. 225

*Ham.* Arm'd, say you ?

*Mar. and Ber.* Arm'd, my lord.

*Ham.* From top to toe ?

*Mar. and Ber.* My lord, from head to foot.

*Ham.* Then saw you not his face ?

*Hor.* O yes, my lord ; he wore his beaver up. 230

*Ham.* What, look'd he frowningly ?

*Hor.* A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

*Ham.* Pale or red ?

*Hor.* Nay, very pale.

*Ham.* And fix'd his eyes upon you ?

*Hor.* Most constantly.

*Ham.* I would I had been there. 235

*Hor.* It would have much amaz'd you.

*Ham.* Very like, very like. Stay'd it long ?

*Hor.* While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

*Mar. and Ber.* Longer, longer.

*Hor.* Not when I saw't.

*Ham.* His beard was grizzled,—no ? 240

*Hor.* It was, as I have seen it in his life,  
A sable silver'd.

*Ham.* I will watch to-night ;  
Perchance 'twill walk again.

*Hor.* I warrant you it will

*Ham.* If it assume my noble father's person  
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape 245  
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,  
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,  
Let it be tenable in your silence still ;  
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,  
Give it an understanding, but no tongue :  
I will requite your loves. So, fare ye well :

Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,  
I'll visit you.

*All.* Our duty to your honour.

*Ham.* Your love, as mine to you: farewell.

[*Exeunt HOR., MAR., and BER.*

My father's spirit in arms ! all is not well ; 255  
I doubt some foul play : would the night were come !  
Till then sit still, my soul : foul deeds will rise,  
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in POLONIUS'S House.*

*Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.*

*Laer.* My necessaries are embark'd: farewell :  
And, sister, as the winds give benefit,  
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,  
But let me hear from you.

*Oph.* Do you doubt that?

*Laer.* For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour, 5  
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood :  
A violet in the youth of primy nature,  
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,  
The perfume and suppliance of a minute ;  
No more.

*Oph.* No more but so ?

*Laer.* Think it no more. 10  
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone  
In thews and bulk ; but as this temple waxes,  
The inward service of the mind and soul  
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now ;  
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmire 15  
The virtue of his will : but you must fear,  
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own ;  
For he himself is subject to his birth :  
He may not, as unvalu'd persons do,  
Carve for himself ; for on his choice depends 20  
The safety and the health of the whole state ;  
And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd  
Unto the voice and yielding of that body  
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,  
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it 25  
As he in his particular act and place  
May give his saying deed ; which is no further

Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.  
 Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain  
 If with too credent ear you list his songs,  
 Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open  
 To his unmaster'd importunity. 30  
 Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister;  
 And keep within the rear of your affection,  
 Out of the shot and danger of desire. 35  
 The fairest maid is prodigal enough  
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon:  
 Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes:  
 The canker galls the infants of the spring  
 Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd; 40  
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth  
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.  
 Be wary, then; best safety lies in fear:  
 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

*Oph.* I shall the effect of this good lesson keep  
 As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,  
 Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,  
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;  
 Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,  
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads, 50  
 And recks not his own read.

*Laer.* O, fear me not.  
 I stay too long:—but here my father comes.

*Enter POLONIUS.*

A double blessing is a double grace;  
 Occasion smiles upon a second leave.  
*Pol.* Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame! 55  
 The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,  
 And you are stay'd for. There,—my blessing with you!  
 [*Laying his hand on LAERTES'S head.*  
 And these few precepts in thy memory  
 See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
 Nor any unproportion'd thought his act. 60  
 Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.  
 The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
 Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;  
 But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
 Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware 65  
 Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,  
 Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.  
 Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:

Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy, 70

But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy:

For the apparel oft proclaims the man;

And they in France of the best rank and station

Are most select and generous chief in that.

Neither a borrower nor a lender be: 75

For loan oft loses both itself and friend;

And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.

This above all,—to thine ownself be true;

And it must follow, as the night the day,

Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!

*Laer.* Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

*Pol.* The time invites you; go, your servants 'tend.

*Laer.* Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well  
What I have said to you.

*Oph.* 'Tis in my memory lock'd, 85  
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

*Laer.* Farewell.

[Exit.]

*Pol.* What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

*Oph.* So please you, something touching the Lord Ham'et.

*Pol.* Marry, well bethought: 90  
'Tis told me he hath very oft of late

Given private time to you; and you yoursel'f  
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous:

If it be so,—as so 'tis put on me,

And that in way of caution,—I must tell you, 95

You do not understand yourself so clearly

As it behoves my daughter and your honour.

What is between you? give me up the truth.

*Oph.* He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders  
Of his affection to me.

100

*Pol.* Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,  
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his *tenders*, as you call them?

*Oph.* I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

*Pol.* Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby; 105  
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay  
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;  
Or,—not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,  
Wringing it thus,—you'll tender me a fool.

*Oph.* My lord, he hath importun'd me with love  
In honourable fashion.

110

*Pol.* Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

*Oph.* And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,  
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

*Pol.* Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know, 115  
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul  
Lends the tongue vows. these blazes, daughter,  
Giving more light than heat,—extinct in both,  
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,—  
You must not take for fire. From this time 120  
Be somewhat scanner of your maiden presence;  
Set your entreatments at a higher rate  
Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,  
Believe so much in him, that he is young;  
And with a larger tether may he walk 125  
Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,  
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,—  
Not of that dye which their investments show,  
But mere implorators of unholy suits,  
Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds, 130  
The better to beguile. This is for all,—  
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,  
Have you so slander any moment's leisure  
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.  
Look to't, I charge you; come your ways. 135

*Oph.* I shall obey, my lord.

[*Exeunt.*

#### SCENE IV.—*The Platform.*

*Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.*

*Ham.* The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

*Hor.* It is a nipping and an eager air.

*Ham.* What hour now?

*Hor.* I think it lacks of twelve.

*Mar.* No, it is struck.

*Hor.* Indeed? I heard it not: then it draws near the season  
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk. 6

[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off within.*  
What does this mean, my lord?

*Ham.* The king doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse,  
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;  
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down, 10  
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out  
The triumph of his pledge.

*Hor.* Is it a custom?

*Ham.* Ay, marry, is't:  
 But to my mind,—though I am native here,  
 And to the manner born,—it is a custom  
 More honour'd in the breach than the observance.      15  
 This heavy-headed revel—east and west—  
 Makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nations:  
 They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase  
 Soil our addition; and, indeed, it takes  
 From our achievements, though perform'd at height,  
 The pith and marrow of our attribute.      20  
 So oft it chances in particular men  
 That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
 As in their birth,—wherein they are not guilty,  
 Since nature cannot choose his origin,—  
 By the o'er-growth of some complexion,  
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason;  
 Or by some habit, that too much o'er-leavens  
 The form of plausible manners;—that these men,—  
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
 Being nature's livery or fortune's star,—  
 Their virtues else,—be they as pure as grace,  
 As infinite as man may undergo,—  
 Shall in the general censure take corruption  
 From that particular fault: the dram of eale  
 Doth all the noble substance of a doubt  
 To his own scandal.      35

*Hor.*      Look, my lord, it comes!

*Enter Ghost.*

*Ham.* Angels and ministers of grace defend us!—  
 Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,  
 Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
 Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
 Thou com'st in such a questionable shape  
 That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,  
 King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me!      40  
 Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell  
 Why thy canonis'd bones, hearsed in death,  
 Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,  
 Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,  
 Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws  
 To cast thee up again! What may this mean,  
 That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel,  
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,  
 Making night hideous and we fools of nature      45  
 50

So horridly to shake our disposition  
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls? 55  
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?  
[Ghost beckons HAMLET.

*Hor.* It beckons you to go away with it,  
As if it some impartment did desire  
To you alone.

*Mar.* Look, with what courteous action 60  
It waves you to a more removed ground:  
But do not go with it.

*Hor.* No, by no means.

*Ham.* It will not speak; then will I follow it.

*Hor.* Do not, my lord.

*Ham.* Why, what should be the fear? 65  
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;  
And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?  
It waves me forth again;—I'll follow it.

*Hor.* What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,  
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff 70  
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,  
And there assume some other horrible form,  
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,  
And draw you into madness? think of it:  
The very place puts toys of desperation,  
Without more motive, into every brain  
That looks so many fathoms to the sea, 75  
And hears it roar beneath.

*Ham.* It waves me still.—  
Go on; I'll follow thee.

*Mar.* You shall not go, my lord.

*Ham.* Hold off your hands. 80

*Hor.* Be rul'd; you shall not go.

*Ham.* My fate cries out,  
And makes each petty artery in this body  
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.— [Ghost beckons.  
Still am I call'd;—unhand me, gentlemen;—

[Breaking from them.  
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me. 85  
I say, away!—Go on, I'll follow thee.

[Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET.

*Hor.* He waxes desperate with imagination.

*Mar.* Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

*Hor.* Have after.—To what issue will this come?

*Mar.* Something is rotten in the state of Denmark. 90

*Hor.* Heaven will direct it.

*Mar.* Nay, let's follow him.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*A more remote part of the Platform.*

*Enter Ghost and HAMLET.*

*Ham.* Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no farther.

*Ghost.* Mark me.

*Ham.* I will.

*Ghost.* My hour is almost come,  
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames  
Must render up myself.

*Ham.* Alas, poor ghost!

*Ghost.* Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing  
To what I shall unfold.

*Ham.* Speak; I am bound to hear.

*Ghost.* So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

*Ham.* What?

*Ghost.* I am thy father's spirit;  
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,  
And, for the day, confin'd to waste in fires  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,  
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word  
Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy young blood;  
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;  
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,  
And each particular hair to stand on end,  
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine;  
But this eternal blazon must not be  
To ears of flesh and blood.—List, list, O, list!—  
If thou didst ever thy dear father love,—

*Ham.* O God!

*Ghost.* Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

*Ham.* Murder!

*Ghost.* Murder most foul, as in the best it is;  
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

*Ham.* Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift  
As meditation or the thoughts of love,  
May sweep to my revenge.

*Ghost.* I find thee apt;  
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed

Thatrotsitselfin easeon Lete wharf,  
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear :  
'Tis given out that, sleeping in mine orchard,  
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark  
Is by a forged process of my death,  
Rankly abus'd: but know, thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown.

*Ham.* O my prophetic soul ! mine uncle !

*Ghost.* Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,—  
O wicked wit and gifts that have the power  
So to seduce !—won to his shameful lust  
The will of my most seeming virtuous queen :  
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there !  
From me, whose love was of that dignity  
That it went hand in hand even with the vow  
I made to her in marriage ; and to decline  
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor  
To those of mine !

(But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,  
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven ;  
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,  
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,  
And prey on garbage.)  
But, soft ! methinks I scent the morning air ;  
Brief let me be.—Sleeping within mine orchard,  
My custom always in the afternoon,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,  
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,  
And in the porches of mine ears did pour  
The leperous distilment ; whose effect  
Holds such an enmity with blood of man  
That, swift as quicksilver, it courses through  
The natural gates and alleys of the body ;  
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset  
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,  
The thin and wholesome blood : so did it mine ;  
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,  
Most lazarus-like, with vile and loathsome crust,  
All my smooth body.  
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand,  
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once despatch'd :  
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,  
Unhousel'd, unanointed, unanel'd ;

No reckoning made, but sent to my account  
With all my imperfections on my head :—

*Ham.* O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible! 80

*Ghost.* If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;  
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
A couch for luxury and damnèd incest.  
But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,  
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive 85  
Against thy mother aught: leave her to Heaven,  
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,  
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!  
The glowworm shows the matin to be near,  
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:  
Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me. 90 [Exit.]

*Ham.* O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?  
And shall I couple hell?—O, fie!—Hold, my heart;  
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,  
But bear me stiffly up.—Remember thee! 95  
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat  
In this distracted globe. Remember thee!  
Yea, from the table of my memory  
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past, 100  
That youth and observation copied there;  
And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain,  
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven.—  
O most pernicious woman! 105

O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!  
My tables,—meet it is I set it down,  
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;  
At least, I am sure, it may be so in Denmark: [Writing.  
So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word; 110  
It is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me:*  
I have sworn't.

*Hor.* [within.] My lord, my lord,—  
*Mar.* [within.] Lord Hamlet,—  
*Hor.* [within.] Heaven secure him!  
*Mar.* [within.] So be it!  
*Hor.* [within.] Illo, ho, ho, my lord! 115  
*Ham.* Illo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.

*Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.*

*Mar.* How is't, my noble lord?  
*Hor.* What news, my lord?

*Ham.* O, wonderful!

*Hor.* Good my lord, tell it.

*Ham.* No; you'll reveal it.

*Hor.* Not I, my lord, by heaven.

*Mar.*

Nor I, my lord.

*Ham.* How say you, then; would heart of man once think  
But you'll be secret? [it?—

*Hor. and Mar.* Ay, by heaven, my lord.

*Ham.* There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark—  
But he's an arrant knave.

*Hor.* There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave  
To tell us this.

*Ham.* Why, right; you are i' the right; And so, without more circumstance at all,

I hold it fit that we shake hands and part:

You, as your business and desire shall point you,—

For every man has business and desire,  
Such as it is;—and for mine own poor part,

Look you, I'll go pray.

*Hor.* These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

*Ham.* I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;  
Yes, faith, heartily.

*Hor.* There's no offence, my lord.

*Ham.* Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,  
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,—

It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:

For your desire to know what is between us,  
O'ermaster'd as you may. And now, good friends,

As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,

Give me one poor request.

*Hor.* What is't, my lord? we will.

*Ham.* Never make known what you have seen to-night.

*Hor. and Mar.* My lord, we will not.

*Ham.* Nay, but swear't.

*Hor.* In faith, 145

My lord, not I.

*Mar.* Nor I, my lord, in faith.

*Ham.* Upon my sword.

*Mar.* We have sworn, my lord, already.

*Ham.* Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

*Ghost. [beneath.]* Swear.

*Ham.* Ha, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there, true-penny?—

Come on,—you hear this fellow in the cellarage,—  
Consent to swear.

*Hor.* Propose the oath, my lord.

*Ham.* Never to speak of this that you have seen,  
Swear by my sword.

*Ghost. [beneath.]* Swear.

*Ham.* *Hic et ubique?* then we'll shift our ground.—  
Come hither, gentlemen,  
And lay your hands again upon my sword :  
Never to speak of this that you have heard,  
Swear by my sword.

155

*Ghost. [beneath.]* Swear.

*Ham.* Well said, old mole ! canst work i' the earth so fast ?  
A worthy pioneer !—Once more remove, good friends.

*Hor.* O day and night, but this is wondrous strange !

*Ham.* And therefore as a stranger give it welcome. 165  
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come ;—

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,

How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,—

As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic disposition on,—

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

As, *Well, well, we know;*—or, *We could, an if we would;*—  
175

*Or, If we list to speak;*—or, *There be, an if they might;*—

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note

That you know aught of me :—this not to do,

So grace and mercy at your most need help you,—

180  
Swear.

*Ghost. [beneath.]* Swear.

*Ham.* Rest, rest, perturbed spirit !—So, gentlemen,  
With all my love I do command me to you :

And what so poor a man as Hamlet is

May do, to express his love and friending to you,

God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together ;

And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.

The time is out of joint :—O cursed spite,

That ever I was born to set it right !—

Nay, come, let's go together.

185

190  
[Exeunt.]

## A C T I I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in POLONIUS's House.*

*Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO.*

*Pol.* Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

*Rey.* I will, my lord.

*Pol.* You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,  
Before you visit him, to make inquiry  
Of his behaviour.

*Rey.* My lord, I did intend it.

*Pol.* Marry, well said; very well said. Look you, sir,  
Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris;  
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,  
What company, at what expense ; and finding,  
By this encompassment and drift of question,      5  
That they do know my son, come you more nearer  
Than your particular demands will touch it :  
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him ;  
As thus, *I know his father and his friends,*  
*And in part him;*—do you mark this, Reynaldo ?      15

*Rey.* Ay, very well, my lord.

*Pol.* *And in part him;*—but, you may say, *not well.*  
*But if't be he I mean, he's very wild;*  
*Addicted so and so;* and there put on him  
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank      20  
As may dishonour him; take heed of that;  
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips  
As are companions noted and most known  
To youth and liberty.

*Rey.* As gaming, my lord.

*Pol.* Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing,      25  
Quarrelling :—you may go so far.

*Rey.* My lord, that would dishonour him.

*Pol.* Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge.  
You must not put another scandal on him,  
That he is open to incontinency ;      30  
That's not my meaning: but breathe his faults so quaintly,  
That they may seem the taints of liberty;  
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind;  
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,  
Of general assault.

*Rey.* But, my good lord,—

*Pol.* Wherefore should you do this ?      35

- Rey.* Ay, my lord,  
I would know that.
- Pol.* Marry, sir, here's my drift;  
And I believe it is a fetch of warrant:  
You laying these slight sullies on my son,  
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working, 40  
Mark you,  
Your party in converse, him you would sound,  
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes  
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assur'd  
He closes with you in this consequence; 45  
*Good sir, or so; or friend, or gentleman,—*  
According to the phrase or the addition  
Of man and country.
- Rey.* Very good, my lord.
- Pol.* And then, sir, does he this,—he does,—  
What was I about to say?—By the mass, I was 50  
About to say something:—where did I leave?
- Rey.* At *closes in the consequence,*  
*At friend or so, and gentleman.*
- Pol.* At—closes in the consequence,—ay, marry;  
He closes with you thus:—*I know the gentleman;* 55  
*I saw him yesterday, or t'other day,*  
*Or then, or then; with such, or such; and, as you say,*  
*There was he gaming; there o'ertook in's rouse;*  
*There falling out at tennis:* or perchance,  
*I saw him enter such a house,—or so forth.—* 60  
See you now;  
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:  
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,  
With windlasses, and with assays of bias,  
By indirections find directions out: 65  
So, by my former lecture and advice,  
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?
- Rey.* My lord, I have.
- Pol.* God b' wi' you; fare you well.
- Rey.* Good my lord!
- Pol.* Observe his inclination in yourself. 70
- Rey.* I shall, my lord.
- Pol.* And let him ply his music.
- Rey.* Well, my lord.
- Pol.* Farewell! [Exit REYNALDO.]

*Enter OPHELIA.*  
How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

*Oph.* Alas, my lord, I have been so affrighted !

*Pol.* With what, i' the name of Heaven ?

*Oph.* My lord, as I was sewing in my chamber,  
Lord Hamlet,—with his doublet all unbraç'd ;  
No hat upon his head ; his stockings foul'd,  
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle ;  
Pale as his shirt ; his knees knocking each other ;  
And with a look so piteous in purport  
As if he had been loosed out of hell  
To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.

*Pol.* Mad for thy love ?

*Oph.* My lord, I do not know ;  
But truly I do fear it.

*Pol.* What said he ?

*Oph.* He took me by the wrist, and held me hard ;  
Then goes he to the length of all his arm ;  
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
He falls to such perusal of my face  
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so ;  
At last,—a little shaking of mine arm,  
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,—  
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound  
That it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
And end his being : that done, he lets me go :  
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,  
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes ;  
For out o' doors he went without their help,  
And to the last bended their light on me.

*Pol.* Come, go with me : I will go seek the king.  
This is the very ecstasy of love ;  
Whose violent property fordoes itself,  
And leads the will to desperate undertakings,  
As oft as any passion under heaven  
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry,—  
What, have you given him any hard words of late ?

*Oph.* No, my good lord ; but, as you did command,  
I did repel his letters, and denied  
His access to me.

*Pol.* That hath made him mad.  
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment  
I had not quoted him : I fear'd he did but trifle,  
And meant to wreck thee ; but, beshrew my jealousy !  
It seems it is as proper to our age  
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions  
As it is common for the younger sort

To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king:  
 This must be known; which, being kept close, might  
 move  
 More grief to hide than hate to utter love. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*A Room in the Castle.*

*Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and Attendants.*

*King.* Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern! Moreover that we much did long to see you, The need we have to use you did provoke Our hasty sending. Something have you heard Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it, Since nor the exterior nor the inward man Resembles that it was. What it should be, More than his father's death, that thus hath put him So much from the understanding of himself, I cannot dream of: I entreat you both, That being of so young days brought up with him, And since so neighbour'd to his youth and humour, That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court Some little time: so by your companies To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather, So much as from occasion you may glean, Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus, That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

*Queen.* Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you; And sure I am two men there are not living To whom he more adheres. If it will please you To show us so much gentry and good-will As to expend your time with us awhile, For the supply and profit of our hope, Your visitation shall receive such thanks As fits a king's remembrance.

*Ros.* Both your majesties Might, by the sovereign power you have of us, Put your dread pleasures more into command Than to entreaty.

*Guil.* We both obey,  
*And here give up ourselves, in the full bent,* 30

To lay our service freely at your feet,  
To be commanded.

*King.* Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

*Queen.* Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz :  
And I beseech you instantly to visit  
My too-much-changed son.—Go, some of you, 35  
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

*GUIL.* Heavens make our presence and our practices  
Pleasant and helpful to him !

*Queen.*

Ay, amen !

[*Exeunt ROS., GUIL., and some Attendants.*

*Enter POLONIUS.*

*Pol.* The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord, 40  
Are joyfully return'd.

*King.* Thou still hast been the father of good news.

*Pol.* Have I, my lord ? Assure you, my good liege,  
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,  
Both to my God and to my gracious king : 45  
And I do think,—or else this brain of mine  
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure  
As it hath us'd to do,—that I have found  
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

*King.* O, speak of that ; that do I long to hear.

*Pol.* Give first admittance to the ambassadors ;  
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

*King.* Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

[*Exit POLONIUS.*

He tells me, my sweet queen, that he hath found  
The head and source of all your son's distemper. 55

*Queen.* I doubt it is no other but the main,—  
His father's death and our o'erhasty marriage.

*King.* Well, we shall sift him.

*Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.*

Welcome, my good friends !  
ay, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

*Volt.* Most fair return of greetings and desires. 60  
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress  
His nephew's levies ; which to him appear'd  
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack ;  
But, better look'd into, he truly found  
It was against your highness : whereat griev'd,—  
That so his sickness, age, and impotence 65  
Was falsely borne in hand,—sends out arrests

On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;  
 Receives rebuke from Norway; and, in fine,  
 Makes vow before his uncle never more  
 To give the assay of arms against your majesty. 70  
 Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,  
 Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee;  
 And his commission to employ those soldiers,  
 So levied as before, against the Polack:  
 With an entreaty, herein further shown, 75  
 That it might please you to give quiet pass  
 Through your dominions for this enterprise,  
 On such regards of safety and allowance  
 As therein are set down.

*King.* It likes us well; 80  
 And at our more consider'd time we'll read,  
 Answer, and think upon this business.  
 Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour:  
 Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together:  
 Most welcome home!

[*Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.*]  
*Pol.* This business is well ended.— 85

My liege, and madam,—to expostulate  
 What majesty should be, what duty is,  
 Why day is day, night night, and time is time,  
 Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.  
 Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit, 90  
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,  
 I will be brief:—your noble son is mad:  
 Mad call I it; for to define true madness,  
 What is't but to be nothing else but mad?  
 But let that go.

*Queen.* More matter with less art. 95  
*Pol.* Madam, I swear I use no art at all.

That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true 'tis pity;  
 And pity 'tis 'tis true: a foolish figure;  
 But farewell it, for I will use no art.  
 Mad let us grant him, then: and now remains  
 That we find out the cause of this effect; 100  
 Or rather say, the cause of this defect,  
 For this effect defective comes by cause:  
 Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.  
 Perpend.

I have a daughter,—have whilst she is mine;  
 Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,  
 Hath given me this: now gather, and surmise. 105  
 [Reads.]

*To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,*—

110

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase,—*beautified* is a vile phrase: but you shall hear. Thus:

[Reads.

*In her excellent white bosom, these, etc.*—

*Queen.* Came this from Hamlet to her?

114

*Pol.* Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful. [Reads.

*Doubt thou the stars are fire;*

*Doubt that the sun doth move;*

*Doubt truth to be a liar;*

*But never doubt I love.*

119

*O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not art to reckon my groans: but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it.* Adieu.

*Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him,* HAMLET.

This, in obedience, hath my daughter show'd me: 125  
 And more above, hath his solicitings,  
 As they fell out by time, by means, and place,  
 All given to mine ear.

*King.* But how hath she receiv'd his love?

*Pol.* What do you think of me?

*King.* As of a man faithful and honourable.

130

*Pol.* I would fain prove so. But what might you think, When I had seen this hot love on the wing,—

As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that, Before my daughter told me,—what might you, Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,

135

If I had play'd the desk or table-book; Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb;

Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;— What might you think? No, I went round to work, And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:

140

*Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy sphere;* This must not be: and then I precepts gave her, That she should lock herself from his resort,

Admit no messengers, receive no tokens. Which done, she took the fruits of my advice; 145

And he, repulsèd,—a short tale to make,— Fell into a sadness; then into a fast;

Thence to a watch; thence into a weakness; Thence to a lightness; and, by this declension,

Into the madness wherein now he raves  
And all we wail for. 150

*King.* Do you think 'tis this?

*Queen.* It may be, very likely.

*Pol.* Hath there been such a time,—I'd fain know that,—  
That I have positively said, '*Tis so,*  
When it prov'd otherwise?

*King.* Not that I know.

*Pol.* Take this from this, if this be otherwise:

[Pointing to his head and shoulder.]  
If circumstances lead me, I will find  
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed  
Within the centre.

*King.* How may we try it further?

*Pol.* You know, sometimes he walks for hours together 160  
Here in the lobby.

*Queen.* So he does, indeed.

*Pol.* At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him:

Be you and I behind an arras then;

Mark the encounter : if he love her not,

And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,  
Let me be no assistant for a state,  
But keep a farm and carters. 165

*King.* We will try it.

*Queen.* But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

*Pol.* Away, I do beseech you, both away :  
I'll board him presently :—O, give me leave.

Ergonomics, 2000, 43, 11

*Enter HAMLET,*

How does my good Lord Ha-  
ven Well God a mercy

*Bal.* Do you know me, my lord?

*Pot.* Do you know me, my lord?  
*Ham.* Excellent, excellent well; you're a fishmonger.

*Ham.* Excellent, exc.  
*Pol.* Not I, my lord.

*Pot.* Not I, my lord.  
*Ham.* Then I would you were so honest a man.

*Ham.* Then I would you were so honest a man.  
*Pol.* Honest, my lord!

*Fol.* Honest, my lord:

*Pet.* That's very true, my lord. 180

*Ham.* For if the sun breed man

*Ran.* For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being  
a god kissing carrion,—Have you a daughter?

*Haw. Let her not w-*

*Ham.* Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a bless-

ing; but not as your daughter may conceive:—friend, look to't.

186

*Pol.* How say you by that?—[*Aside.*] Still harping on my daughter:—yet he knew me not at first: he said I was a fishmonger: he is far gone, far gone; and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again.—What do you read, my lord?

*Ham.* Words, words, words.

*Pol.* What is the matter, my lord?

*Ham.* Between who?

*Pol.* I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

195

*Ham.* Slanders, sir: for the satirical slave says here that ‘old men have grey beards; that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams.’ all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for you yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

*Pol.* [*aside.*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.—Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

205

*Ham.* Into my grave?

*Pol.* Indeed, that is out o' the air.—[*Aside.*] How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

*Ham.* You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal,—except my life, except my life, except my life.

215

*Pol.* Fare you well, my lord.

*Ham.* These tedious old fools!

#### *Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

*Pol.* You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is.

*Ros.* [*to POLONIUS.*] God save you, sir! [*Exit POLONIUS.*]

*Guil.* Mine honoured lord!

*Ros.* My most dear lord!

*Ham.* My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

*Ros.* As the indifferent children of the earth.

*Guil.* Happy in that we are not overhappy;

225

On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

*Ham.* Nor the soles of her shoe?

*Ros.* Neither, my lord.

*Ham.* Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours?—What's the news?

*Ros.* None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

*Ham.* Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

*Guil.* Prison, my lord!

*Ham.* Denmark's a prison.

*Ros.* Then is the world one.

*Ham.* A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

*Ros.* We think not so, my lord.

*Ham.* Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

*Ros.* Why, then, your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

*Ham.* O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

*Guil.* Which dreams, indeed, are ambition: for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

*Ham.* A dream itself is but a shadow.

*Ros.* Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

*Ham.* Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

*Ros.* and *Guil.* We'll wait upon you.

*Ham.* No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

*Ros.* To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

*Ham.* Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

*Guil.* What should we say, my lord?

*Ham.* Why, anything—but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

272

235

245

253

262

*Ros.* To what end, my lord?

*Ham.* That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for or no?

*Ros.* What say you?

*Ham.* [aside.] Nay, then, I have an eye of you.—If you love me, hold not off.

*Guil.* My lord, we were sent for.

282

*Ham.* I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late,—but wherefore I know not,—lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises; and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire,—why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. / What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

299

*Ros.* My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

*Ham.* Why did you laugh, then, when I said, *Man delights not me?*

*Ros.* To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you: we coted them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

*Ham.* He that plays the king shall be welcome,—his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o' the sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt fort.—What players are they?

313

*Ros.* Even those you were wont to take delight in,—the tragedians of the city.

*Ham.* How chances it they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

*Ros.* I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation. 319

*Ham.* Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?

*Ros.* No, indeed, they are not.

*Ham.* How comes it? do they grow rusty?

*Ros.* Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: but there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for't: these are now the fashion; and so berattle the common stages,—so they call them,—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and dare scarce come thither. 329

*Ham.* What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players,—as it is most like, if their means are no better,—their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

*Ros.* Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy: there was for awhile no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question. 339

*Ham.* Is't possible?

*Guil.* O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

*Ham.* Do the boys carry it away?

*Ros.* Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.

*Ham.* It is not strange; for mine uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mouthes at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out. 349

[Flourish of trumpets within.]

*Guil.* There are the players.

*Ham.* Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb; lest my ostent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

*Guil.* In what, my dear lord?

*Ham.* I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw. 360

*Enter POLONIUS.*

*Pol.* Well be with you, gentlemen!

*Ham.* Hark you, Guildenstern ;—and you too ;—at each ear a hearer : that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swathing-clouts.

*Ros.* Happily he's the second time come to them ; for they say an old man is twice a child.

*Ham.* I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players ; mark it.—You say right, sir : o' Monday morning ; 'twas so indeed.

*Pol.* My lord, I have news to tell you.

370

*Ham.* My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

*Pol.* The actors are come hither, my lord.

*Ham.* Buzz, buzz !

*Pol.* Upon mine honour,—

*Ham.* Then came each actor on his ass,—

*Pol.* The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, comical, pastoral, pastoral-historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited : Seneca cannot be too heavy nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

382

*Ham.* O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou !

*Pol.* What a treasure had he, my lord ?

*Ham.* Why—

One fair daughter, and no more,  
The which he loved passing well.

*Pol. [aside.]* Still on my daughter.

*Ham.* Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah ?

*Pol.* If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

392

*Ham.* Nay, that follows not.

*Pol.* What follows, then, my lord ?

*Ham.* Why—

As by lot, God wot,

and then, you know,

It came to pass, as most like it was,—

the first row of the pious chanson will show you more ; for look where my abridgment comes.

400

*Enter four or five Players.*

You are welcome, masters ; welcome, all :—I am glad to see thee well :—welcome, good friends.—O, my old friend ! Thy face is valanced since I saw thee last ; comest thou to beard me in Denmark ?—What, my young lady and mistress ! By'r lady, your ladyship is nearer heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring.—Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at anything we see : we'll have a speech straight : come, give us a taste of your quality ; come, a passionate speech.

411

I Play. What speech, my lord ?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once,—but it was never acted ; or, if it was, not above once ; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million ; 'twas caviare to the general : but it was,—as I received it, and others whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine,—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indite the author of affectation ; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved : 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido ; and thereabout of it especially where he speaks of Priam's slaughter : if it live in your memory, begin at this line ;—let me see, let me see :—

427

The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,

—it is not so :—it begins with Pyrrhus :—

The rugged Pyrrhus,—he whose sable arms,  
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble  
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,—  
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd  
With heraldry more dismal ; head to foot  
Now is he total gules ; horridly trick'd  
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,  
Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,  
That lend a tyrannous and damned light  
To their vile murders : roasted in wrath and fire,  
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,  
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus  
Old grandsire Priam seeks.—

430

435

440

So proceed you.

Pol. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent  
and good discretion.

445

I Play. Anon he finds him

Striking too short at Greeks ; his antique sword,  
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,  
Repugnant to command : unequal match'd,  
Pyrrhus at Priam drives ; in rage strikes wide :  
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword  
The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,  
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top  
Stoops to his base ; and with a hideous crash  
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear : for, lo ! his sword,  
Which was declining on the milky head  
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick :  
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood :  
And, like a neutral to his will and matter,  
Did nothing. 450  
But as we often see, against some storm,  
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,  
The bold winds speechless, and the orb below  
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder  
Doth rend the region ; so, after Pyrrhus' pause,  
A roused vengeance sets him new a-work ;  
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall  
On Mars his armour, forg'd for proof eterne,  
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
Now falls on Priam.— 455  
Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune ! All you gods,  
In general synod, take away her power ;  
Break all the spokes and felloes from her wheel,  
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,  
As low as to the fiends ! 475

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to the barber's, with your beard.—Pr'ythee, say on.—He's for a jig, or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps :—say on ; come to Hecuba.

I Play. But who, O, who had seen the mobled queen,— 480

Ham. *The mobled queen ?*

Pol. That's good ; *mobled queen* is good.

I Play. Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames

With bisson rheum ; a clout upon that head  
Where late the diadem stood ; and, for robe,  
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,  
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up ;—  
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,  
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd :  
But if the gods themselves did see her then,  
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport  
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,  
The instant burst of clamour that she made,—  
Unless things mortal move them not at all,—  
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven  
And passion in the gods. 495

Pol. Look, whether he has not turned his colour, and has tears in's eyes.—Pray you, no more.

Ham. 'Tis well ; I'll have thee speak out the rest soon.—Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do

you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time; after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

504

*Pol.* My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

*Ham.* Odd's bodikin, man, better: use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less they deserve the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

*Pol.* Come, sirs.

*Ham.* Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow. [Exit POLONIUS with all the Players but the First.]—Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

*i Play.* Ay, my lord.

515

*Ham.* We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines which I would set down and insert in't? could you not?

*i Play.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* Very well.—Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [Exit First Player.] My good friends [to ROS. and GUIL.], I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

*Ros.* Good my lord!

[Exeunt ROS. and GUIL.]

*Ham.* Ay, so God b' wi' ye!—Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!

525

Is it not monstrous that this player here,

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

Could force his soul so to his own conceit

That from her working all his visage wan'd;

Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,

530

A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!

For Hecuba?

What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba,

That he should weep for her? What would he do,

535

Had he the motive and the cue for passion

That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,

And cleave the general ear with horrid speech;

Make mad the guilty, and appal the free;

Confound the ignorant, and amaze, indeed,

540

The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,

A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,

Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,

And can say nothing; no, not for a king

545

Upon whose property and most dear life  
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?  
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?  
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?  
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat, 550  
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this, ha?  
'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be  
But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall  
To make oppression bitter; or ere this  
I should have fatted all the region kites  
With this slave's offal:—bloody, bawdy villain! 555  
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!  
O, vengeance!  
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,  
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd, 560  
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,  
And fall a-cursing like a very drab,  
A scullion!  
Fie upon't! fo!—About, my brain! I have heard  
That guilty creatures, sitting at a play, 565  
Have by the very cunning of the scene  
Been struck so to the soul that presently  
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;  
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players 570  
Play something like the murder of my father  
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;  
I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,  
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen  
May be the devil: and the devil hath power 575  
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps  
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,—  
As he is very potent with such spirits,—  
Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds  
More relative than this:—the play's the thing 580  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

[Exit.

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Castle.*

*Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ,  
and GUILDENSTERN.*

*King.* And can you, by no drift of circumstance,  
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,  
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet  
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

*Ros.* He does confess he feels himself distracted;      5  
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

*Guil.* Nor do we find him forward to be sounded;  
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof  
When we would bring him on to some confession  
Of his true state.

*Queen.* Did he receive you well?      10

*Ros.* Most like a gentleman.

*Guil.* But with much forcing of his disposition.

*Ros.* Niggard of question; but, of our demands,  
Most free in his reply.

*Queen.* Did you assay him  
To any pastime?

*Ros.* Madam, it so fell out that certain players  
We o'er-raught on the way: of these we told him;  
And there did seem in him a kind of joy  
To hear of it: they are about the court;  
And, as I think, they have already order      15  
This night to play before him.

*Pol.* 'Tis most true:  
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties  
To hear and see the matter.

*King.* With all my heart; and it doth much content me  
To hear him so inclin'd.—      25  
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,  
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

*Ros.* We shall, my lord.      [Exeunt ROS. and GUIL.  
*King.* Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;  
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,  
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here      30  
Affront Ophelia:  
Her father and myself,—lawful espials,—  
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,  
We may of their encounter frankly judge;

And gather by him, as he is behav'd,  
If't be the affliction of his love or no  
That thus he suffers for.

*Queen.* I shall obey you :—  
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish  
That your good beauties be the happy cause  
Of Hamlet's wildness : so shall I hope your virtues      40  
Will bring him to his wonted way again,  
To both your honours.

*Oph.* Madam, I wish it may. [*Exit QUEEN.*]  
*Pol.* Ophelia, walk you here.—Gracious, so please you,  
We will bestow ourselves.—[To OPHELIA.] Read on this  
That show of such an exercise may colour      [book;  
Your loneliness.—We are oft to blame in this,—      46  
'Tis too much prov'd,—that with devotion's visage  
And pious action we do sugar o'er  
The devil himself.

*King. [aside.]* O, 'tis too true!  
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!  
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,  
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it  
Than is my deed to my most painted word:  
O heavy burden!      55

*Pol.* I hear him coming : let's withdraw, my lord.  
[*Exeunt KING and POLONIUS.*]

*Enter HAMLET.*

*Ham.* To be, or not to be,—that is the question :—  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,      60  
And by opposing end them?—To die,—to sleep,—  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to,—'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die,—to sleep;—  
To sleep! perchance to dream :—ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause; there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life;      70  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns

That patient merit of the unworthy takes, 75  
 When he himself might his quietus make  
 With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,  
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
 But that the dread of something after death,—  
 The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn  
 No traveller returns,—puzzles the will, 80  
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
 Than fly to others that we know not of?  
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;  
 And thus the native hue of resolution 85  
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;  
 And enterprises of great pith and moment,  
 With this regard, their currents turn awry,  
 And lose the name of action.—Soft you now!  
 The fair Ophelia.—Nymph, in thy orisons 90  
 Be all my sins remember'd.

*Oph.* Good my lord,  
 How does your honour for this many a day?  
*Ham.* I humbly thank you; well, well, well.  
*Oph.* My lord, I have remembrances of yours,  
 That I have longed long to re-deliver; 95  
 I pray you, now receive them.  
*Ham.* No, not I;  
 I never gave you aught.  
*Oph.* My honour'd lord, you know right well you did;  
 And, with them, words of so sweet breath compos'd  
 As made the things more rich: their perfume lost, 100  
 Take these again; for to the noble mind  
 Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.  
 There, my lord.

*Ham.* Ha, ha! are you honest?  
*Oph.* My lord?  
*Ham.* Are you fair?  
*Oph.* What means your lordship? 105  
*Ham.* That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should  
 admit no discourse to your beauty.

*Oph.* Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than  
 with honesty?  
*Ham.* Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner  
 transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force  
 of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was  
 sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did  
 love you once.

*Oph.* Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so. 115

*Ham.* You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

*Oph.* I was the more deceived.

*Ham.* Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldest thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

129

*Oph.* At home, my lord.

*Ham.* Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool nowhere but in's own house. Farewell.

*Oph.* O, help him, you sweet heavens!

*Ham.* If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry,—be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell.

139

*Oph.* O heavenly powers, restore him!

*Ham.* I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face and you make yourselves another: you jig, youamble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

[Exit.

*Oph.* O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!

The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword: 150  
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,

The glass of fashion and the mould of form,

The observ'd of all observers,—quite, quite down!

And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,

That suck'd the honey of his music vows,

Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,

Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;

That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth

Blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me,

To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

155

160

*Re-enter KING and POLONIUS.*

*King.* Love! his affections do not that way tend;  
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,  
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul  
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;  
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose      165  
Will be some danger: which for to prevent,  
I have in quick determination  
Thus set it down:—he shall with speed to England  
For the demand of our neglected tribute:  
Haply, the seas and countries different,      170  
With variable objects, shall expel  
This something-settled matter in his heart;  
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus  
From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

*Pol.* It shall do well: but yet do I believe      175  
The origin and commencement of his grief  
Sprung from neglected love.—How now, Ophelia!  
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;  
We heard it all.—My lord, do as you please;  
But if you hold it fit, after the play,      180  
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him  
To show his grief: let her be round with him;  
And I'll be plac'd, so please you, in the ear  
Of all their conference. If she find him not,  
To England send him; or confine him where      185  
Your wisdom best shall think.

*King.* It shall be so:      185  
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.      [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*A Hall in the Castle.*

*Enter HAMLET and certain Players.*

*Ham.* Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious periwig-

pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise: I could have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it. 13

*I Play.* I warrant your honour.

*Ham.* Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now, this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must, in your allowance, o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, —and heard others praise, and that highly,—not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably. 32

*I Play.* I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

*Ham.* O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them: for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the meantime, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready. 41

[*Exeunt Players.*]

*Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*

How now, my lord! will the king hear this piece of work?

*Pol.* And the queen too, and that presently.

*Ham.* Bid the players make haste. [*Exit POLONIUS.*]

Will you two help to hasten them? 45

*Ros. and Guil.* We will, my lord. [*Exeunt ROS. and GUIL.*]

*Ham.* What, ho, Horatio!

*Enter HORATIO.*

*Hor.* Here, sweet lord, at your service.

*Ham.* Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man  
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.

50

*Hor.* O, my dear lord,—

*Ham.* Nay, do not think I flatter;  
For what advancement may I hope from thee,  
That no revenue hast, but thy good spirits,  
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd?  
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp; 55  
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee  
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?  
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,  
And could of men distinguish, her election  
Hath seal'd thee for herself: for thou hast been 60  
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;  
A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards  
Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and bless'd are those  
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled  
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger 65  
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
As I do thee.—Something too much of this.—  
There is a play to-night before the king; 70  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
Which I have told thee of my father's death:  
I pr'ythee, when thou see'st that act a-foot,  
Even with the very comment of thy soul  
Observe mine uncle: if his occulted guilt 75  
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,  
It is a damned ghost that we have seen;  
And my imaginations are as foul  
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note:  
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face; 80  
And, after, we will both our judgments join  
In censure of his seeming.

*Hor.* Well, my lord:  
If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,  
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

*Ham.* They are coming to the play; I must be idle: 85  
Get you a place.

*Danish march. A flourish. Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS,  
OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and others.*

*King.* How fares our cousin Hamlet?

*Ham.* Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish: I eat the air, promise-crammed: you cannot feed capons so.

*King.* I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine.

*Ham.* No, nor mine now.—My lord, you played once i' the university, you say? [To POLONIUS.

*Pol.* That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.

*Ham.* And what did you enact? 95

*Pol.* I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me.

*Ham.* It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there.—Be the players ready?

*Ros.* Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

*Queen.* Come hither, my good Hamlet, sit by me.

*Ham.* No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

*Pol.* O, ho! do you mark that? [To the KING.

*Ham.* Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[*Lying down at OPHELIA'S feet.*

105

*Oph.* No, my lord.

*Ham.* I mean, my head upon your lap?

*Oph.* You are merry, my lord.

*Ham.* Who, I?

*Oph.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* O, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

*Oph.* Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

113

*Ham.* So long? Nay, then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year: but, by'r lady, he must build churches, then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is,

For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.

120

*Trumpets sound. The dumb show enters.*

Enter a King and a Queen, very lovingly: the Queen embracing him and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner woos the Queen with gifts: she seems loth and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love. [Exeunt. 125]

*Oph.* What means this, my lord?

*Ham.* Marry, this is micing mallecho ; it means mischief.

*Oph.* Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

*Enter Prologue.*

*Ham.* We shall know by this fellow : the players cannot keep counsel ; they'll tell all.

*Oph.* You are naught, you are naught : I'll mark the play.

*Pro.* For us, and for our tragedy,  
Here stooping to your clemency,  
We beg your hearing patiently.

140

*Ham.* Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring ?

*Oph.* 'Tis brief, my lord.

*Ham.* As woman's love.

*Enter a King and a Queen.*

*P. King.* Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round  
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground,  
And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen  
About the world have times twelve thirties been,  
Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands  
Unite committal in most sacred bands.

145

*P. Queen.* So many journeys may the sun and moon  
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!  
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,  
So far from cheer and from your former state,  
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,  
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must :  
For women's fear and love holds quantity ;  
In neither aught, or in extremity.

150

Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;  
And as my love is siz'd, my fear is so :  
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear ;  
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

160

*P. King.* Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too ;  
My operant powers their functions leave to do :  
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,  
Honour'd, belov'd ; and haply one as kind  
For husband shalt thou,—

165

*P. Queen.* O, confound the rest !  
Such love must needs be treason in my breast :  
In second husband let me be accurst !  
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

*Ham.* [aside.] Wormwood, wormwood.

170

*P. Queen.* The instances that second marriage move  
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love :  
A second time I kill my husband dead  
When second husband kisses me in bed.

*P. King.* I do believe you think what now you speak ;  
But what we do determine oft we break.  
Purpose is but the slave to memory ;  
Of violent birth, but poor validity :  
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree ;  
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.  
Most necessary 'tis that we forget  
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt :

175

180

What to ourselves in passion we propose,		
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.		
The violence of either grief or joy,	185	
Their own enactures with themselves destroy :		
Where joy most revels grief doth most lament ;		
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.		
This world is not for aye ; nor 'tis not strange		
That even our loves should with our fortunes change ;	190	
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove		
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.		
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies ;		
The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies.		
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend :	195	
For who not needs shall never lack a friend ;		
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,		
Directly seasons him his enemy.		
But, orderly to end where I begun, —		
Our wills and fates do so contrary run	200	
That our devices still are overthrown ;		
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own ;		
So think thou will no second husband wed :		
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.		
P. Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light !	205	
Sport and repose lock from me day and night !		
To desperation turn my trust and hope !		
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope !		
Each opposite, that blanks the face of joy,		
Meet what I would have well, and it destroy !	210	
Both here and hence, pursue me lasting strife,		
If, once a widow, ever I be wife !		

*Ham.* If she should break it now !

[To OPHELIA.

P. King.	'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile,	
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile		
The tedious day with sleep.	215	[Sleeps.
P. Queen.	Sleep rock thy brain,	
And never come mischance between us twain !		[Exit it.

*Ham.* Madam, how like you this play ?*Queen.* The lady protests too much, methinks.*Ham.* O, but she'll keep her word.*King.* Have you heard the argument ? Is there no offence in't?*Ham.* No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest ;  
No offence i' the world.*King.* What do you call the play ?*Ham.* The Mouse-trap. Marry, how ? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna : Gonzago is the duke's name ; his wife, Baptista : you shall see anon ; 'tis a knavish piece of work : but what o' that ? your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not : let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.*Enter LUCIANUS.*

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

232

*Oph.* You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

*Ham.* I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying. 235

*Oph.* You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

*Ham.* Begin, murderer ;  
Leave thy damnable faces and begin. Come :—  
The croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

*Luc.* Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing :  
Confederate season, else no creature seeing ; 241  
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,  
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,  
Thy natural magic and dire property  
On wholesome life usurp immediately. 245  
[Pour the poison into the sleeper's ears.]

*Ham.* He poisons him i' the garden for's estate. His name's Gonzago : the story is extant, and writ in choice Italian : you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

*Oph.* The king rises.

*Ham.* What, frightened with false fire !

*Queen.* How fares my lord ?

*Pol.* Give o'er the play.

*King.* Give me some light :—away !

*All.* Lights, lights, lights !

255 [Exeunt all but HAM. and HOR.]

*Ham.* Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungalled play ;  
For some must watch, while some must sleep :  
So runs the world away.—

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers,—if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me,—with two Provençal roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir ?

*Hor.* Half a share.

*Ham.* A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,  
This realm dismantled was  
Of Jove himself ; and now reigns here  
A very, very—pajock.

265

*Hor.* You might have rhymed.

*Ham.* O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive ?

*Hor.* Very well, my lord.

*Ham.* Upon the talk of the poisoning,—

*Hor.* I did very well note him.

*Ham.* Ah, ha !—Come, some music ! come, the recorders !— 274

For if the king like not the comedy,  
Why, then, belike,—he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music !

278

*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

*Guil.* Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

*Ham.* Sir, a whole history.

*Guil.* The king, sir,—

*Ham.* Ay, sir, what of him ?

*Guil.* Is, in his retirement, marvellous distempered.

*Ham.* With drink, sir ?

284

*Guil.* No, my lord, rather with choler.

*Ham.* Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor ; for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

*Guil.* Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

*Ham.* I am tame, sir :—pronounce.

*Guil.* The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

*Ham.* You are welcome.

294

*Guil.* Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment : if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

*Ham.* Sir, I cannot.

*Guil.* What, my lord ?

*Ham.* Make you a wholesome answer ; my wit's diseased : but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command ; or, rather, as you say, my mother : therefore no more, but to the matter : my mother, you say,—

304

*Ros.* Then thus she says : your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

*Ham.* O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother !—But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration ?

*Ros.* She desires to speak with you in her closet ere you go to bed.

*Ham.* We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us ?

*Ros.* My lord, you once did love me.

314

*Ham.* So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

*Ros.* Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper ? you do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty if you deny your griefs to your friend.

*Ham.* Sir, I lack advancement.

*Ros.* How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

*Ham.* Ay, but *While the grass grows*,—the proverb is something musty. 323

*Re-enter the Players, with recorders.*

O, the recorders:—let me see one.—To withdraw with you:—why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

*Guil.* O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

*Ham.* I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

*Guil.* My lord, I cannot.

*Ham.* I pray you.

*Guil.* Believe me, I cannot.

333

*Ham.* I do beseech you.

*Guil.* I know no touch of it, my lord.

*Ham.* 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your finger and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

*Guil.* But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill. 341

*Ham.* Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think that I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me you cannot play upon me. 350

*Enter POLONIUS.*

God bless you, sir!

*Pol.* My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

*Ham.* Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

*Pol.* By the mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.

*Ham.* Methinks it is like a weasel.

*Pol.* It is backed like a weasel.

*Ham.* Or like a whale? 359

*Pol.* Very like a whale.

*Ham.* Then will I come to my mother by and by.—They fool me to the top of my bent.—I will come by and by.

*Pol.* I will say so.

*Ham.* By and by is easily said. [Exit POLONIUS.]—Leave me, friends. [Exeunt ROS., GUIL., HOR., and Players.] 'Tis now the very witching time of night, When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood, And do such bitter business as the day Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother.— 370 O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom: Let me be cruel, not unnatural: I will speak daggers to her, but use none; My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites,— 375 How in my words soever she be shent, To give them seals never, my soul, consent! [Exit.]

### SCENE III.—*A Room in the Castle.*

*Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*

*King.* I like him not; nor stands it safe with us To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you; I, your commission, will forthwith despatch, And he to England shall along with you: The terms of our estate may not endure Hazard so dangerous as doth hourly grow Out of his lunacies. 5

*Guil.* We will ourselves provide: Most holy and religious fear it is To keep those many many bodies safe That live and feed upon your majesty. 10

*Ros.* The single and peculiar life is bound, With all the strength and armour of the mind, To keep itself from 'noyance; but much more That spirit upon whose weal depend and rest The lives of many. The cease of majesty 15 Dies not alone; but like a gulf doth draw What's near it with it: it is a massy wheel, Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount, To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which, when it falls, 20

Each small annexment, petty consequence,  
Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone  
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

*King.* Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;  
For we will fetters put upon this fear,      25  
Which now goes too free-footed.

*Ros. and Guil.*

We will haste us.

[*Exeunt Ros. and GUIL.*

*Enter POLONIUS.*

*Pol.* My lord, he's going to his mother's closet:  
Behind the arras I'll convey myself  
To hear the process; I'll warrant she'll tax him home :  
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,      30  
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,  
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear,  
The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege:  
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,  
And tell you what I know.

*King.*

Thanks, dear my lord.

35

[*Exit POLONIUS.*

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,—  
A brother's murder!—Pray can I not,  
Though inclination be as sharp as will:  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;      40  
And, like a man to double business bound,  
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,  
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand  
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,—  
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens      45  
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy  
But to confront the visage of offence?  
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,—  
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;      50  
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer  
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder!—  
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd  
Of those effects for which I did the murder,—  
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.      55  
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?  
In the corrupted currents of this world  
Offence's gilded hand may shew by justice;  
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself

Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above; 60  
 There is no shuffling,—there the action lies  
 In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,  
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,  
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?  
 Try what repentance can: what can it not?  
 Yet what can it when one can not repent?  
 O wretched state! O bosom black as death!  
 O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,  
 Art more engag'd! Help, angels! make assay:  
 Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart, with strings of steel, 70  
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!  
 All may be well. [Retires and kneels.

## Enter HAMLET.

*Ham.* Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;  
 And now I'll do't;—and so he goes to heaven;  
 And so am I reveng'd:—that would be scann'd: 75  
 A villain kills my father; and for that,  
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send  
 To heaven.  
 O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.  
 He took my father grossly, full of bread; 80  
 With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;  
 And how his audit stands who knows save Heaven?  
 But in our circumstance and course of thought  
 'Tis heavy with him: and am I, then, reveng'd,  
 To take him in the purging of his soul, 85  
 When he is fit and season'd for his passage? No.  
 Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:  
 When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;  
 Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;  
 At gaming, swearing; or about some act  
 That has no relish of salvation in't:— 90  
 Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven;  
 And that his soul may be as damn'd and black  
 As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays:  
 This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. [Exit. 95  
 [The KING rises and advances.  
*King.* My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:  
 Words without thoughts never to heaven go. [Exit.

SCENE IV.—*Another Room in the Castle.*

*Enter QUEEN and POLONIUS.*

*Pol.* He will come straight. Look you lay home to him : Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with, And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between Much heat and him. I'll sconce me here.

Pray you, be bound with him.

*Ham.* [within.] Mother, mother, mother !

*Queen.* I'll warrant you ; Fear me not :—withdraw, I hear him coming.

[*POLONIUS goes behind the arras.*

*Enter HAMLET.*

*Ham.* Now, mother, what's the matter ?

*Queen.* Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

*Ham.* Mother, you have my father much offended.

*Queen.* Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

*Ham.* Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

*Queen.* Why, how now, Hamlet !

*Ham.* What's the matter now ?

*Queen.* Have you forgot me ?

*Ham.* No, by the rood, not so :

You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife ; And,—would it were not so !—you are my mother.

*Queen.* Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.

*Ham.* Come, come, and sit you down ; you shall not budge ; You go not till I set you up a glass Where you may see the inmost part of you.

*Queen.* What wilt thou do ? thou wilt not murder me ?— Help, help, ho !

*Pol.* [behind.] What, ho ! help, help, help !

*Ham.* How now ! a rat ? [Draws. Dead, for a ducat, dead !] *Makes a pass through the arras.*

*Pol.* [behind.] O, I am slain ! [Falls, and dies. 25]

*Queen.* O me, what hast thou done ?

*Ham.* Nay, I know not : Is it the king ? [Draws forth POLONIUS.]

*Queen.* O, what a rash and bloody deed is this !

*Ham.* A bloody deed !—almost as bad, good mother, As kill a king and marry with his brother.

*Queen.* As kill a king !

*Ham.* Ay, lady, 'twas my word.— Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell ! [To POLONIUS.]

I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;  
 Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.—  
 Leave wringing of your hands: peace; sit you down,35  
 And let me wring your heart: for so I shall,  
 If it be made of penetrable stuff;  
 If damned custom have not braz'd it so  
 That it is proof and bulwark against sense.

*Queen.* What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue  
 In noise so rude against me?

*Ham.* Such an act41  
 That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;  
 Calls virtue hypocrite; takes off the rose  
 From the fair forehead of an innocent love,  
 And sets a blister there; makes marriage-vows45  
 As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed  
 As from the body of contraction plucks  
 The very soul, and sweet religion makes  
 A rhapsody of words: heaven's face doth glow;  
 Yea, this solidity and compound mass,50  
 With tristful visage, as against the doom,  
 Is thought-sick at the act.

*Queen.* Ah me, what act,  
 That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?

*Ham.* Look here upon this picture and on this,55  
 The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
 See what a grace was seated on this brow;  
 Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;  
 An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;  
 A station like the herald Mercury  
 New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;60  
 A combination and a form, indeed,  
 Where every god did seem to set his seal,  
 To give the world assurance of a man:  
 This was your husband.—Look you now, what follows:  
 Here is your husband, like a mildew'd ear65  
 Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?  
 Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,  
 And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?  
 You cannot call it love; for at your age  
 The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,70  
 And waits upon the judgment: and what judgment  
 Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,  
 Else could you not have motion: but sure that sense  
 Is apoplex'd: for madness would not err;  
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd75

But it reserv'd some quantity of choice  
 To serve in such a difference. What devil was't  
 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?  
 Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,  
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,  
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense  
 Could not so mope.

80

O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,  
 If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,  
 To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,  
 And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame  
 When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,  
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn,  
 And reason panders will.

85

*Queen.* O Hamlet, speak no more:  
 Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;  
 And there I see such black and grained spots  
 As will not leave their tinct.

90

*Ham.* Nay, but to live  
 In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,  
 Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love  
 Over the nasty sty,—

*Queen.* O, speak to me no more;  
 These words like daggers enter in mine ears;  
 No more, sweet Hamlet.

95

*Ham.* A murderer and a villain;  
 A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe  
 Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings;  
 A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,  
 That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,  
 And put it in his pocket!

100

*Queen.* No more.

*Ham.* A king of shreds and patches,—

*Enter Ghost.*

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,  
 You heavenly guards!—What would your gracious figure?

*Queen.* Alas, he's mad!

106

*Ham.* Do you not come your tardy son to chide,  
 That, laps'd in time and passion, lets go by  
 The important acting of your dread command?  
 O, say!

*Ghost.* Do not forget: this visitation  
 Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.  
 But, look, amazement on thy mother sits:

110

O, step between her and her fighting soul,—  
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works,—  
Speak to her, Hamlet.

*Ham.* How is it with you, lady?

*Queen.* Alas, how is't with you,  
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,  
And with the incorporeal air do hold discourse?  
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;  
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,  
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,  
Starts up and stands on end. O gentle son,  
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper  
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

*Ham.* On him, on him! Look you, how pale he glares!  
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,  
Would make them capable.—Do not look upon me;  
Lest with this piteous action you convert  
My stern effects: then what I have to do  
Will want true colour; tears perchance for blood.

*Queen.* To whom do you speak this?

*Ham.* Do you see nothing there?

*Queen.* Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

*Ham.* Nor did you nothing hear?

*Queen.* No, nothing but ourselves.

*Ham.* Why, look you there! look, how it steals away! 135  
My father, in his habit as he liv'd!

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal! [*Exit Ghost.*

*Queen.* This is the very coinage of your brain:  
This bodiless creation ecstasy  
Is very cunning in.

*Ham.* Ecstasy!

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,  
And makes<sup>s</sup> as healthful music: it is not madness  
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,  
And I the matter will re-word; which madness  
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace, 145  
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,  
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks:  
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,  
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,  
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to Heaven;  
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come; 150  
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,  
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue;  
For in the fatness of these pursy times

Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg, 155  
 Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.  
*Queen.* O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.  
*Ham.* O, throw away the worser part of it,  
 And live the purer with the other half.  
 Good-night: but go not to mine uncle's bed; 160  
 Assume a virtue, if you have it not.  
 That monster custom, who all sense doth eat,  
 Of habits, devil, is angel yet in this,—  
 That to the use of actions fair and good  
 He likewise gives a frock or livery 165  
 That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night;  
 And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
 To the next abstinence: the next more easy;  
 For use almost can change the stamp of nature,  
 And either curb the devil, or throw him out 170  
 With wondrous potency. Once more, good-night:  
 And when you are desirous to be bless'd,  
 I'll blessing beg of you.—For this same lord

[Pointing to POLONIUS.]

I do repent: but Heaven hath pleas'd it so, 175  
 To punish me with this, and this with me,  
 That I must be their scourge and minister,  
 I will bestow him, and will answer well  
 The death I gave him. So, again, good-night.—  
 I must be cruel only to be kind:  
 Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.— 180  
 One word more, good lady.

*Queen.* What shall I do?  
*Ham.* Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:  
 Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed;  
 Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse;  
 And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses, 185  
 Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,  
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,  
 That I essentially am not in madness,  
 But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know;  
 For who that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise, 190  
 Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,  
 Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?  
 No, in despite of sense and secrecy,  
 Unpeg the basket on the house's top,  
 Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape, 195  
 To try conclusions, in the basket creep,  
 And break your own neck down.

*Queen.* Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,  
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe  
What thou hast said to me.

*Ham.* I must to England; you know that? 200

*Queen.* Alack,  
I had forgot: 'tis so concluded on.

*Ham.* There's letters seal'd: and my two school-fellows,  
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,—  
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way, 205  
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;

For 'tis the sport to have the engineer  
Hoist with his own petard: and't shall go hard,  
But I will delve one yard below their mines,  
And blow them at the moon: O, 'tis most sweet, 210  
When in one line two crafts directly meet.—

This man shall set me packing:  
I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.—

Mother, good-night.—Indeed, this counsellor  
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave, 215  
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.  
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you:—

Good-night, mother. [Exeunt severally; HAM. dragging POL.

## A C T I V.

### SCENE I.—A Room in the Castle

Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, and GULDENSTERN.

*King.* There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves:  
You must translate: 'tis fit we understand them.  
Where is your son?

*Queen.* Bestow this place on us a little while.

[To ROS. and GUIL., who go out.

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night!

5

*King.* What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

*Queen.* Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend  
Which is the mightier: in his lawless fit,  
Behind the arras hearing something stir,  
He whips his rapier out, and cries, *A rat, a rat!* 10  
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills  
The unseen good old man.

*King.* O heavy deed!  
It had been so with us had we been there:  
His liberty is full of threats to all;  
To you yourself, to us, to every one.  
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?  
It will be laid to us, whose providence  
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt,  
This mad young man: but so much was our love,  
We would not understand what was most fit;  
But, like the owner of a foul disease,  
To keep it from divulging, let it feed  
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

15

*Queen.* To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:  
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore  
Among a mineral of metals base,  
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

25

*King.* O Gertrude, come away!  
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch  
But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed  
We must, with all our majesty and skill,  
Both countenance and excuse.—Ho, Guildenstern!

30

*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:  
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,  
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:  
Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body  
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

35

[*Exeunt ROS. and GUIL.*

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;  
And let them know both what we mean to do  
And what's untimely done: so haply slander,—  
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,  
As level as the cannon to his blank,  
Transports his poison'd shot,—may miss our name,  
And hit the woundless air.—O, come away!  
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

40

[*Exeunt.* 45]

SCENE II.—*Another Room in the Castle.*

*Enter HAMLET.*

*Ham.* Safely stowed.

*Ros. and Guil. [within.]* Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

*Ham.* What noise? who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

*Ros.* What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

*Ham.* Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

*Ros.* Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence,  
And bear it to the chapel.

*Ham.* Do not believe it.

*Ros.* Believe what?

*Ham.* That I can keep your counsel, and not mine own.  
Besides, to be demanded of a sponge!—what replication  
should be made by the son of a king?

*Ros.* Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

*Ham.* Ay, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance, his  
rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best  
service in the end: he keeps them, like an ape, in the corner  
of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed: when he  
needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and,  
sponge, you shall be dry again. 20

*Ros.* I understand you not, my lord.

*Ham.* I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish  
ear.

*Ros.* My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go  
with us to the king.

*Ham.* The body is with the king, but the king is not with  
the body. The king is a thing,—

*Guil.* A thing, my lord!

*Ham.* Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all  
after. [Exeunt. 30

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SCENE III.—*Another Room in the Castle.*

*Enter KING, attended.*

*King.* I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.  
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!  
Yet must not we put the strong law on him:  
He's lov'd of the distracted multitude,  
Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;  
And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,  
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,  
This sudden sending him away must seem  
Deliberate pause: diseases desperate grown

By desperate appliance are reliev'd,  
Or not at all.

10

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ.*

How now! what hath befallen?

*Ros.* Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,  
We cannot get from him.

*King.* But where is he?

*Ros.* Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

*King.* Bring him before us.

16

*Ros.* Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

*Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.*

*King.* Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

*Ham.* At supper.

*King.* At supper! where?

*Ham.* Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service,—two dishes, but to one table: that's the end.

26

*King.* Alas, alas!

*Ham.* A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that have fed of that worm.

*King.* What dost thou mean by this?

*Ham.* Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

*King.* Where is Polonius?

*Ham.* In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But, indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

37

*King.* Go seek him there. [To some Attendants.

*Ham.* He will stay till ye come. [Exeunt Attendants.

*King.* Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—  
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve  
For that which thou hast done,—must send thee hence  
With fiery quickness: therefore prepare thyself;  
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,  
The associates 'tend, and everything is bent  
For England.

*Ham.* For England!

*King.* Ay, Hamlet.

*Ham.* Good.

46

*King.* So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.'

*Ham.* I see a cherub that sees them.—But, come; for England!—Farewell, dear mother.

*King.* Thy loving father, Hamlet.

*Ham.* My mother: father and mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother.—Come, for England!

[*Exit.*]

*King.* Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard; Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night:

55

Away! for everything is seal'd and done

That else leans on the affair: pray you, make haste.

[*Exeunt* ROS. and GUIL.

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,—

As my great power thereof may give thee sense,

Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red

60

After the Danish sword, and thy free awe

Pays homage to us,—thou mayst not coldly set

Our sovereign process; which imports at full,

By letters conjuring to that effect,

The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;

65

For like the hectic in my blood he rages,

And thou must cure me: till I know 'tis done,

Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin.

[*Exit.*]

#### SCENE IV.—*A Plain in Denmark.*

*Enter* FORTINBRAS, and Forces marching.

*For.* Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;

Tell him that, by his licence, Fortinbras

Craves the conveyance of a promis'd march

Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.

If that his majesty would aught with us,

5

We shall express our duty in his eye;

And let him know so.

*Cap.* I will do't, my lord.

*For.* Go softly on. [*Exeunt* FOR. and Forces.

*Enter* HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GULDENSTERN, etc.

*Ham.* Good sir, whose powers are these?

*Cap.* They are of Norway, sir.

*Ham.* How purpos'd, sir, I pray you?

10

*Cap.* Against some part of Poland.

*Ham.* Who commands them, sir?

*Cap.* The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras,

*Ham.* Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,  
Or for some frontier? 15

*Cap.* Truly to speak, and with no addition,  
We go to gain a little patch of ground  
That hath in it no profit but the name.  
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;  
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole 20

A ranker rate should it be sold in fee.

*Ham.* Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

*Cap.* Yes, it is already garrison'd.

*Ham.* Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats  
Will not debate the question of this straw: 25  
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,  
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without  
Why the man dies.—I humbly thank you, sir.

*Cap.* God b' wi' you, sir. [Exit.]

*Ros.* Will't please you go, my lord?

*Ham.* I'll be with you straight. Go a little before. 30

[*Exeunt all but HAMLET.*]

How all occasions do inform against me,  
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.  
Sure He that made us with such large discourse, 35  
Looking before and after, gave us not  
That capability and godlike reason  
To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be  
Bestial oblivion or some craven scruple  
Of thinking too precisely on the event,—  
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom  
And ever three parts coward,—I do not know  
Why yet I live to say, *This thing's to do;*  
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means  
To do't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me: 40  
Witness this army, of such mass and charge,  
Led by a delicate and tender prince;  
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,  
Makes mouths at the invisible event;  
Exposing what is mortal and unsure 45  
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,  
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great  
Is not to stir without great argument.

But greatly to find quarrel in a straw  
 When honour's at the stake. How stand I, then,  
 That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,  
 Excitements of my reason and my blood,  
 And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see  
 The imminent death of twenty thousand men,  
 That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,  
 Go to their graves like beds; fight for a plot  
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,  
 Which is not tomb enough and continent  
 To hide the slain?—O, from this time forth,  
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! [Exit. 65

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SCENE V.—ELSINORE. *A Room in the Castle.**Enter QUEEN and HORATIO.**Queen.* I will not speak with her.*Hor.* She is importunate; indeed, distract:  
 Her mood will needs be pitied.*Queen.* What would she have?*Hor.* She speaks much of her father; says she hears  
 There's tricks i' the world; and hems, and beats her heart;  
 Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt, 6  
 That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,  
 Yet the unshaped use of it doth move  
 The hearers to collection; they aim at it,  
 And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts; 10  
 Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield them,  
 Indeed would make one think there might be thought,  
 Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.  
*'Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew**Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.* 15*Queen.* Let her come in. [Exit HORATIO.  
 To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,  
 Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:  
 So full of artless jealousy is guilt,  
 It spills itself in fearing to be spilt. 20*Re-enter HORATIO with OPHELIA.**Oph.* Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?*Queen.* How now, Ophelia!

*Oph.*

How should I your true love know  
 From another one?  
 By his cockle hat and staff,  
 And his sandal shoon.

[Sings.]

25

*Queen.* Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?  
*Oph.* Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

He is dead and gone, lady,  
 He is dead and gone;  
 At his head a grass green turf,  
 At his heels a stone.

[Sings.]

30

*Queen.* Nay, but, Ophelia,—*Oph.* Pray you, mark.

White his shroud as the mountain snow,

[Sings.]

Enter KING.

*Queen.* Alas, look here, my lord.

35

*Oph.*

Larded with sweet flowers;  
 Which bewept to the grave did go  
 With true-love showers.

[Sings.]

*King.* How do you, pretty lady?

*Oph.* Well, God 'ild you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

*King.* Conceit upon her father.

*Oph.* Pray you, let's have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this:

45

To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,  
 All in the morning betime,  
 And I a maid at your window,  
 To be your Valentine.

[Sings.]

Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,  
 And dupp'd the chamber-door.

50

*King.* Pretty Ophelia!*Oph.* Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on't:

By Gis and by Saint Charity,  
 Alack, and fie for shame!

[Sings.]

55

*King.* How long hath she been thus?

*Oph.* I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it: and so I thank

you for your good counsel.—Come, my coach!—Good-night, ladies; good-night, sweet ladies; good-night, good-night.

[Exit.

*King.* Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you.

[Exit HORATIO.

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs  
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,  
When sorrows come, they come not single spies, 65  
But in battalias! First, her father slain:  
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author  
Of his own just remove: the people muddied,  
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,  
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly 70  
In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia  
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,  
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts:  
Last, and as much containing as all these,  
Her brother is in secret come from France; 75  
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,  
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear  
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;  
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,  
Will nothing stick our person to arraign 80  
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,  
Like to a murdering piece, in many places  
Gives me superfluous death.

[A noise within.

*Queen.* Alack, what noise is this?

*King.* Where are my Switzers? let them guard the door.

*Enter a Gentleman.*

What is the matter?

*Gent.* Save yourself, my lord: 85  
The ocean, overpeering of his list,  
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste  
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,  
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;  
And, as the world were now but to begin, 90  
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,  
The ratifiers and props of every word,  
They cry, *Choose we; Laertes shall be king!*  
Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,  
*Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!* 95

*Queen.* How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!  
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!

*King.* The doors are broke. [Noise within.

*Enter LAERTES, armed; Danes following.*

*Laer.* Where is this king?—Sirs, stand you all without.

*Danes.* No, let's come in.

*Laer.*

I pray you, give me leave. 100

*Danes.* We will, we will. [They retire without the door.

*Laer.* I thank you:—keep the door.—O thou vile king,  
Give me my father!

*Queen.*

Calmly, good Laertes.

*Laer.* That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard;  
Cries cuckold to my father; brands the harlot 105  
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow  
Of my true mother.

*King.* What is the cause, Laertes,  
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?—  
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person: 110  
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,  
That treason can but peep to what it would,  
Acts little of his will.—Tell me, Laertes,  
Why thou art thus incens'd.—Let him go, Gertrude:—  
Speak, man. 115

*Laer.* Where is my father?

*King.* Dead.

*Queen.* But not by him.

*King.* Let him demand his fill.

*Laer.* How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:  
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!  
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit! 120  
I dare damnation:—to this point I stand,—  
That both the worlds I give to negligence,  
Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd  
Most thoroughly for my father.

*King.* Who shall stay you?

*Laer.* My will, not all the world: 125  
And for my means, I'll husband them so well,  
They shall go far with little.

*King.* Good Laertes,

If you desire to know the certainty  
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge  
That, sweepstake, you will draw both friend and foe, 130  
Winner and loser?

*Laer.* None but his enemies.

*King.* Will you know them, then?

*Laer.* To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms;  
And, like the kind life-rendering pelican,  
Repast them with my blood.

*King.* Why, now you speak  
Like a good child and a true gentleman.

That I am guiltless of your father's death,  
And am most sensible in grief for it,  
It shall as level to your judgment pierce  
As day does to your eye.

*Danes. [within.]* Let her come in. 140

*Laer.* How now! what noise is that?

*Re-enter OPHELIA, fantastically dressed with straws and flowers.*

O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt,  
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eyes!—  
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight,  
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May! 145  
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!—  
O heavens! is't possible a young maid's wits  
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?  
Nature is fine in love; and where 'tis fine  
It sends some precious instance of itself 150  
After the thing it loves.

*Oph.* They bore him barefac'd on the bier;  
Hey no nonny, nonny, hey nonny;  
And on his grave rain'd many a tear,— [Sings.

Fare you well, my dove! 155

*Laer.* Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,  
It could not move thus.

*Oph.* You must sing, *Down a-down, an you call him a-down-a.* O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter. 160

*Laer.* This nothing's more than matter.

*Oph.* There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

*Laer.* A document in madness,—thoughts and remembrance fitted. 165

*Oph.* There's fennel for you, and columbines:—there's rue for you; and here's some for me:—we may call it herb-grace o' Sundays:—O, you must wear your rue with a difference.—There's a daisy:—I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died:—they say, he made a good end,— 171

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy,— [Sings.

*Laer.* Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,  
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

*Oph.*

And will he not come again?  
And will he not come again?  
No, no, he is dead,  
Go to thy death-bed,  
He never will come again.

[Singz. 175]

His beard was as white as snow,  
All flaxen was his poll :  
He is gone, he is gone,  
And we cast away moan :  
God ha' mercy on his soul !

180

And of all Christian souls, I pray God.—God b' wi' ye. [Exit.  
*Laer.* Do you see this, O God?

186

*King.* Laertes, I must commune with your grief,  
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,  
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,  
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me :  
If by direct or by collateral hand  
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,  
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,  
To you in satisfaction ; but if not,  
Be you content to lend your patience to us,  
And we shall jointly labour with your soul  
To give it due content.

190

195

*Laer.* Let this be so ;  
His means of death, his obscure burial,—  
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,  
No noble rite nor formal ostentation,—  
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,  
That I must call't in question.

200

*King.* So you shall ;  
And where the offence is, let the great axe fall.  
I pray you, go with me. [Exit.

SCENE VI.—*Another Room in the Castle.**Enter HORATIO and a Servant.**Hor.* What are they that would speak with me ?*Serv.* Sailors, sir : they say they have letters for you.

*Hor.* Let them come in.— [Exit Servant.  
I do not know from what part of the world  
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet. 5

*Enter Sailors.*1 *Sail.* God bless you, sir.

*Hor.* Let Him bless thee too.

*I Sail.* He shall, sir, an't please Him. There's a letter for you, sir; it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am led to know it is.

*Hor.* [reads.] *Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king: they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour; and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy: but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou wouldest fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell. He that thou knowest thine,*

HAMLET. 27

Come, I will give you way for these your letters;  
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me  
To him from whom you brought them.

[*Exeunt.*

### SCENE VII.—*Another Room in the Castle.*

*Enter KING and LAERTES.*

*King.* Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,  
And you must put me in your heart for friend,  
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,  
That he, which hath your noble father slain,  
Pursu'd my life.

*Laer.* It well appears:—but tell me  
Why you proceeded not against these feats,  
So crimeful and so capital in nature,  
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,  
You mainly were stirr'd up.

*King.* O, for two special reasons;  
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinew'd,  
But yet to me they are strong. The queen his mother  
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself,—  
My virtue or my plague, be it either which,—

5

10

She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,  
 That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,  
 I could not but by her. The other motive,  
 Why to a public count I might not go,  
 Is the great love the general gender bear him;  
 Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,  
 Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,  
 Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,  
 Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,  
 Would have reverted to my bow again,  
 And not where I had aim'd them.

*Laer.* And so have I a noble father lost;      25  
 A sister driven into desperate terms,—  
 Whose worth, if praises may go back again,  
 Stood challenger on mount of all the age  
 For her perfections:—but my revenge will come.

*King.* Break not your sleeps for that: you must not think  
 That we are made of stuff so flat and dull      31  
 That we can let our beard be shook with danger,  
 And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more:  
 I lov'd your father, and we love ourself;—  
 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine,—      35

*Enter a Messenger.*

How now! what news?

*Mess.* Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:  
 This to your majesty; this to the queen.

*King.* From Hamlet! Who brought them?  
*Mess.* Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not:  
 They were given me by Claudio,—he receiv'd them      40  
 Of him that brought them.

*King.* Laertes, you shall hear them.—  
 Leave us.      [Exit Messenger.  
 [Reads.] High and mighty,—You shall know I am set  
 naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see  
 your kingly eyes: when I shall, first asking your pardon  
 thereunto, recount the occasions of my sudden and more  
 strange return.      HAMLET.

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?  
 Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

*Laer.* Know you the hand?  
*King.* 'Tis Hamlet's character:—Naked,—  
 And in a postscript here, he says, alone.      51  
 Can you advise me?

*Laer.* I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come;  
It warms the very sickness in my heart,  
That I shall live, and tell him to his teeth,  
*Thus didest thou.*

55

*King.* If it be so, Laertes,—  
As how should it be so? how otherwise?—  
Will you be rul'd by me?

*Laer.* Ay, my lord;  
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

*King.* To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,—  
As checking at his voyage, and that he means  
No more to undertake it,—I will work him  
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,  
Under the which he shall not choose but fall:  
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe;  
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,  
And call it accident.

65

*Laer.* My lord, I will be rul'd;  
The rather if you could devise it so  
That I might be the organ.

*King.* It falls right.  
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,  
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality  
Wherein they say you shine: your sum of parts  
Did not together pluck such envy from him  
As did that one; and that, in my regard,  
Of the unworthiest siege.

70

*Laer.* What part is that, my lord?  
*King.* A very riband in the cap of youth,  
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes  
The light and careless livery that it wears  
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,  
Importing health and graveness.—Two months since,  
Here was a gentleman of Normandy,—  
I've seen myself, and serv'd against, the French,  
And they can well on horseback: but this gallant  
Had witchcraft in't; he grew unto his seat;  
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,  
As he had been incorp'sd and demi-natur'd  
With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought,  
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,  
Come short of what he did.

75

80

85

*Laer.* A Norman was't?

*King.* A Norman.

90

*Laer.* Upon my life, Lamond.

*King.*

The very same.

*Laer.* I know him well: he is the brooch, indeed,  
And gem of all the nation.

*King.* He made confession of you;  
And gave you such a masterly report  
For art and exercise in your defence,  
And for your rapier most especially,  
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed  
If one could match you: the scrimers of their nation,  
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,  
If you oppos'd them. Sir, this report of his  
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,  
That he could nothing do but wish and beg  
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.  
Now, out of this,—

*Laer.*

What out of this, my lord?

*King.* Laertes, was your father dear to you?  
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,  
A face without a heart?

*Laer.*

Why ask you this?

*King.* Not that I think you did not love your father;  
But that I know love is begun by time;  
And that I see, in passages of proof,  
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.  
There lives within the very flame of love  
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it;  
And nothing is at a like goodness still;  
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,  
Dies in his own too much: that we would do  
We should do when we would; for this *would* changes,  
And hath abatements and delays as many  
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;  
And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh  
That hurts by easing. But to the quick o' the ulcer:—  
Hamlet comes back: what would you undertake  
To show yourself your father's son in deed  
More than in words?

*Laer.*

To cut his throat i' the church.

*King.* No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarise;  
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,  
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.  
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home:  
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,  
And set a double varnish on the fame  
The Frenchman gave you; bring you, in fine, together,

And wager on your heads: he, being remiss,  
Most generous, and free from all contriving,  
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
A sword unbated, and, in a pass of practice,  
Requite him for your father.

135

*Laer.* I will do't:  
And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.  
I bought an unction of a mountebank,  
So mortal that but dip a knife in it,  
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,  
Collected from all simples that have virtue  
Under the moon, can save the thing from death  
That is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point  
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,  
It may be death.

140

*King.* Let's further think of this;  
Weigh what convenience both of time and means  
May fit us to our shape: if this should fail,  
And that our drift look through our bad performance,      150  
'Twere better not assay'd: therefore this project  
Should have a back or second, that might hold  
If this should blast in proof. Soft!—let me see:—  
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings,—  
I ha't:  
When in your motion you are hot and dry,—  
As make your bouts more violent to that end,—  
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepar'd him  
A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,  
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,      160  
Our purpose may hold there.

155

160

*Enter Queen.*

How now, sweet queen!

*Queen.* One woe doth tread upon another's heel,  
So fast they follow:—your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

*Laer.* Drown'd! O, where?

*Queen.* There is a willow grows aslant a brook,  
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;  
There with fantastic garlands did she come  
Of crowflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,  
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,  
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:      170  
There, on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds  
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;

165

170

When down her weedy trophies and herself  
 Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;  
 And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up :      175  
 Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes ;  
 As one incapable of her own distress,  
 Or like a creature native and indu'd  
 Unto that element : but long it could not be  
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
 Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
 To muddy death.      180

*Laer.* Alas, then, she is drown'd?

*Queen.* Drown'd, drown'd.

*Laer.* Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,  
 And therefore I forbid my tears : but yet      185  
 It is our trick ; nature her custom holds,  
 Let shame say what it will : when these are gone,  
 The woman will be out.—Adieu, my lord :  
 I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,  
 But that this folly douts it.      [Exit.

*King.* Let's follow, Gertrude ;      190  
 How much I had to do to calm his rage !  
 Now fear I this will give it start again ;  
 Therefore let's follow.      [Exeunt.

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—*A Churchyard.*

*Enter two Clowns with spades, etc.*

1 *Clo.* Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully  
 seeks her own salvation ?

2 *Clo.* I tell thee she is ; and therefore make her grave  
 straight : the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian  
 burial.

1 *Clo.* How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her  
 own defence ?

2 *Clo.* Why, 'tis found so.

1 *Clo.* It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else. For  
 here lies the point : if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an  
 act : and an act hath three branches ; it is to act, to do, and  
 to perform : argal, she drowned herself wittingly.      12

*2 Clo.* Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,—

*1 Clo.* Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: if the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes,—mark you that: but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

*2 Clo.* But is this law?

20

*1 Clo.* Ay, marry, is't; crowner's quest law.

*2 Clo.* Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman she should have been buried out of Christian burial.

*1 Clo.* Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even Christian.—Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession.

*2 Clo.* Was he a gentleman?

30

*1 Clo.* He was the first that ever bore arms.

*2 Clo.* Why, he had none.

*1 Clo.* What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says, Adam digged: could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself,—

*2 Clo.* Go to.

*1 Clo.* What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

*2 Clo.* The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

41

*1 Clo.* I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.

*2 Clo.* Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

*1 Clo.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

*2 Clo.* Marry, now I can tell.

50

*1 Clo.* To't.

*2 Clo.* Mass, I cannot tell.

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.*

*1 Clo.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and when you are asked this question next, say a grave-maker; the houses that

he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan ; fetch me a stoup of liquor. [Exit Second Clown.

In youth, when I did love, did love, [Digs and sings.  
Methought it was very sweet,  
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove, 60  
O, methought, there was nothing meet.

*Ham.* Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making ?

*Hor.* Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

*Ham.* 'Tis e'en so : the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

I Clo. But age, with his stealing steps, [Sings.  
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,  
And hath shipp'd me until the land,  
As if I had never been such. 70

[Throws up a skull.

*Ham.* That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once : how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jawbone, that did the first murder ! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'erreaches ; one that would circumvent God, might it not ?

*Hor.* It might, my lord.

*Ham.* Or of a courtier ; which could say, *Good-morrow, sweet lord ! How dost thou, good lord ?* This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it,—might it not ? 80

*Hor.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* Why, e'en so : and now my Lady Worm's ; chapless, and knocked about the mazard with a sexton's spade : here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding but to play at loggats with 'em ? mine ache to think on't.

I Clo. A pick-axe and a spade, a spade, [Sings.  
For and a shrouding sheet :  
O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet. 90

[Throws up another skull.

*Ham.* There's another : why may not that be the skull of a lawyer ? Where be his quiddits now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks ? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery ? Hum ! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognisances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries : is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of

his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha? 103

*Hor.* Not a jot more, my lord.

*Ham.* Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

*Hor.* Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

*Ham.* They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow.—Whose grave's this, sirrah?

*I Clo.* Mine, sir.—

O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

[*Singr.*

*Ham.* I think it be thine indeed; for thou liest in't. 113

*I Clo.* You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

*Ham.* Thou dost lie in't, to be in't, and say it is thine: 'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

*I Clo.* 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again from me to you.

*Ham.* What man dost thou dig it for?

*I Clo.* For no man, sir.

*Ham.* What woman, then?

*I Clo.* For none, neither. 122

*Ham.* Who is to be buried in't?

*I Clo.* One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

*Ham.* How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe.—How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

*I Clo.* Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that day that our last King Hamlet o'ercame Fortinbras. 132

*Ham.* How long is that since?

*I Clo.* Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it was the very day that young Hamlet was born,—he that is mad, and sent into England.

*Ham.* Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

*I Clo.* Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

*Ham.* Why?

*I Clo.* 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he. 142

*Ham.* How came he mad?

*I Clo.* Very strangely, they say.

*Ham.* How strangely?

*I Clo.* Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

*Ham.* Upon what ground?

*I Clo.* Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

*Ham.* How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot? 150

*I Clo.* Faith, if he be not rotten before he die,—as we have many pocky corses now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in,—he will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

*Ham.* Why he more than another?

*I Clo.* Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth three-and-twenty years. 160

*Ham.* Whose was it?

*I Clo.* A mad fellow's it was: whose do you think it was?

*Ham.* Nay, I know not.

*I Clo.* A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! 'a poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

*Ham.* This?

*I Clo.* E'en that. 168

*Ham.* Let me see. [*Takes the skull.*]—Alas, poor Yorick! —I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come; make her laugh at that.—Pr'ythee, Horatio, tell me one thing. 180

*Hor.* What's that, my lord?

*Ham.* Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

*Hor.* E'en so.

*Ham.* And smelt so? pah! [Puts down the skull.]

*Hor.* E'en so, my lord.

*Ham.* To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why

may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

*Hor.* 'Twere to consider too curiously to consider so. 190

*Ham.* No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: as thus; Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,  
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away;  
O, that that earth which kept the world in awe  
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!—

200

But soft! but soft! aside.—Here comes the king.

*Enter Priests, etc., in procession; the Corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following; KING, QUEEN, their Trains, etc.*

The queen, the courtiers: who is that they follow?  
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken  
The corse they follow did with desperate hand  
Fordo its own life: 'twas of some estate.

Couch we awhile and mark. [Retiring with HOR.

*Laer.* What ceremony else?

*Ham.* That is Laertes,  
A very noble youth: mark.

*Laer.* What ceremony else?

*1 Priest.* Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd  
As we have warrantise: her death was doubtful; 210  
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,  
She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd  
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,  
Shards, flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on her; 215  
Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants,  
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home  
Of bell and burial.

*Laer.* Must there no more be done?

*1 Priest.* No more be done:  
We should profane the service of the dead 220  
To sing a requiem, and such rest to her  
As to peace-parted souls.

*Laer.* Lay her i' the earth;—  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring!—I tell thee, churlish priest,  
A ministering angel shall my sister be 225  
When thou liest howling.

*Ham.* What, the fair Ophelia!  
*Queen.* Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

[Scattering flowers.]

I hop'd thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;  
 I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,  
 And not have strew'd thy grave.

*Laer.*

O, treble woe

230

Fall ten times treble on that cursed head  
 Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense  
 Depriv'd thee of!—Hold off the earth awhile,  
 Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

[Leaps into the grave.]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead, 235  
 Till of this flat a mountain you have made,  
 To o'er-top old Pelion or the skyish head  
 Of blue Olympus.

*Ham.* [advancing.] What is he whose grief  
 Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow  
 Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand 240  
 Like wonder-wounded hearers? this is I,  
 Hamlet the Dane.

[Leaps into the grave.]

*Laer.*

The devil take thy soul!

[Grappling with him.]

*Ham.* Thou pray'st not well.  
 I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat;  
 For, though I am not splenitive and rash, 245  
 Yet have I something in me dangerous,  
 Which let thy wiseness fear: away thy hand.

*King.* Pluck them asunder.

*Queen.* Hamlet! Hamlet!

*All.* Gentlemen,—

*Hor.*

Good my lord, be quiet.

[The Attendants part them, and they  
 come out of the grave.]

*Ham.* Why, I will fight with him upon this theme 250  
 Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

*Queen.* O my son, what theme?

*Ham.* I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers  
 Could not, with all their quantity of love,  
 Make up my sum.—What wilt thou do for her? 255

*King.* O, he is mad, Laertes.

*Queen.* For love of God, forbear him.

*Ham.* 'Swounds, show me what thou'l't do:  
 Woul'd weep? woul'd fight? woul'd fast? woul'd tear thyself?  
 Woul'd drink up eisel? eat a crocodile? 260

I'll do't.—Dost thou come here to whine?  
To outface me with leaping in her grave?  
Be buried quick with her, and so will I :  
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw  
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,  
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,  
Make Ossa like a wart ! Nay, an thou'l mouth,  
I'll rant as well as thou.

265

*Queen.* This is mere madness :  
And thus awhile the fit will work on him ;  
Anon, as patient as the female dove,  
When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,  
His silence will sit drooping.

270

*Ham.* Hear you, sir ;  
What is the reason that you use me thus ?  
I lov'd you ever : but it is no matter ;  
Let Hercules himself do what he may,  
The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.

275

*King.* I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.—

[*Exit* HORATIO.

Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech ;

[*To* LAERTES.

We'll put the matter to the present push.—

280

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.—

This grave shall have a living monument :

An hour of quiet shortly shall we see ;

Till then, in patience our proceeding be.

[*Exeunt*.

## SCENE II.—*A Hall in the Castle.*

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.*

*Ham.* So much for this, sir : now let me see the other ;  
You do remember all the circumstance ?

*Hor.* Remember it, my lord !

*Ham.* Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting  
That would not let me sleep : methought I lay  
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,  
And prais'd be rashness for it,—let us know,  
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,  
When our deep plots do fail : and that should teach us  
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will.

5

*Hor.* That is most certain.

10

*Ham.* Up from my cabin,  
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark  
Grop'd I to find out them: had my desire;  
Finger'd their packet; and, in fine, withdrew  
To mine own room again; making so bold,  
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal  
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,  
O royal knavery! an exact command,—  
Larded with many several sorts of reasons,  
Importing Denmark's health and England's too,  
With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,—  
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated  
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,  
My head should be struck off.

*Hor.* Is't possible?

*Ham.* Here's the commission. read it at more leisure.  
But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed?

*Hor.* I beseech you.

*Ham.* Being thus benetted round with villainies,—  
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,  
They had begun the play,—I sat me down;  
Devis'd a new commission; wrote it fair;  
I once did hold it, as our statists do,  
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much  
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now  
It did me yeoman's service. Wilt thou know  
The effect of what I wrote?

*Hor.* Ay, good my lord.

*Ham.* An earnest conjuration from the king,—  
As England was his faithful tributary;  
As love between them like the palm might flourish;  
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,  
And stand a comma 'tween their amities;  
And many such like *as's* of great charge,—  
That, on the view and know of these contents,  
Without debatement further, more or less,  
He should the bearers put to sudden death,  
Not shriving-time allow'd.

*Hor.* How was this seal'd?

*Ham.* Why, even in that was Heaven ordinant.  
I had my father's signet in my purse,  
Which was the model of that Danish seal:  
Folded the writ up in the form of the other;  
Subscrib'd it; gave't the impression; plac'd it safely,  
The changeling never known. Now, the next day

15

20

25

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35

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45

50

Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent  
Thou know'st already.

*Hor.* So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't. 55

*Ham.* Why, man, they did make love to this employment;  
They are not near my conscience; their defeat  
Does by their own insinuation grow:  
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes  
Between the pass and fell incensed points  
Of mighty opposites. 60

*Hor.* Why, what a king is this!

*Ham.* Does it not, think'st thee, stand me now upon,—  
He that hath kill'd my king and wived my mother;  
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes; 65  
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,  
And with such cozenage,—is't not perfect conscience  
To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be damn'd,  
To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil? 70

*Hor.* It must be shortly known to him from England  
What is the issue of the business there.

*Ham.* It will be short: the interim is mine;  
And a man's life's no more than to say One.  
But I am very sorry, good Horatio, 75  
That to Laertes I forgot myself;  
For by the image of my cause I see  
The portraiture of his: I'll court his favours:  
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me  
Into a towering passion.

*Hor.* Peace; who comes here? 80

*Enter OSRIC.*

*Osr.* Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

*Ham.* I humbly thank you, sir.—Dost know this water-fly?

*Hor.* No, my good lord.

*Ham.* Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to  
know him. He hath much land, and fertile; let a beast be  
lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess:  
'tis a chough; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of  
dirt.

*Osr.* Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should  
impart a thing to you from his majesty. 90

*Ham.* I will receive it with all diligence of spirit. Put  
your bounet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

*Osr.* I thank your lordship, 'tis very hot.

*Ham.* No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

*Osr.* It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

*Ham.* Methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion.

*Osr.* Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry,—as 'twere,  
—I cannot tell how.—But, my lord, his majesty bade me  
signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head.  
Sir, this is the matter,—

101

*Ham.* I beseech you, remember,—

[HAMLET moves him to put on his hat.]

*Osr.* Nay, in good faith; for mine ease, in good faith.  
Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an  
absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very  
soft society and great showing: indeed, to speak feelingly  
of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall  
find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would  
see.

109

*Ham.* Sir, his definiteness suffers no perdition in you;—  
though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the  
arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect  
of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him  
to be a soul of great article; and his infusion of such dearth  
and rareness as, to make true diction of him, his semblable  
is his mirror; and who else would trace him, his umbrage,  
nothing more.

*Osr.* Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

*Ham.* The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentle-  
man in our more rawer breath?

120

*Osr.* Sir?

*Hor.* Is't not possible to understand in another tongue?  
You will do't, sir, really.

*Ham.* What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

*Osr.* Of Laertes?

*Hor.* His purse is empty already; all's golden words are  
spent.

*Ham.* Of him, sir.

*Osr.* I know, you are not ignorant,—

*Ham.* I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it  
would not much approve me.—Well, sir.

131

*Osr.* You are not ignorant of what excellency Laertes is,—

*Ham.* I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with  
him in excellency; but to know a man well were to know  
himself.

*Osr.* I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation  
laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

*Ham.* What's his weapon?

*Osr.* Rapier and dagger.

*Ham.* That's two of his weapons: but, well.

*Osr.* The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so: three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

*Ham.* What call you the carriages?

*Hor.* I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

*Osr.* The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

*Ham.* The phrase would be more german to the matter if we could carry cannon by our sides: I would it might be hangers till then. But, on: six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish: why is this *imponed*, as you call it?

*Osr.* The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between you and him he shall not exceed you three hits: he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

*Ham.* How if I answer no?

*Osr.* I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

*Ham.* Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me: let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

*Osr.* Shall I re-deliver you e'en so?

*Ham.* To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

*Osr.* I commend my duty to your lordship.

*Ham.* Yours, yours. [Exit OSRIC.]—He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

*Hor.* This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

*Ham.* He did comply with his dug before he sucked it. Thus has he,—and many more of the same bevy, that I know the drossy age dotes on,—only got the tune of the time, and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fanned and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

*Enter a Lord.*

*Lord.* My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

*Ham.* I am constant to my purposes; they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensover, provided I be so able as now.

*Lord.* The king and queen and all are coming down. 190

*Ham.* In happy time.

*Lord.* The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

*Ham.* She well instructs me.

*Hor.* You will lose this wager, my lord.

[*Exit Lord.*]

*Ham.* I do not think so; since he went into France I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldest not think how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

*Hor.* Nay, good my lord,—

200

*Ham.* It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman.

*Hor.* If your mind dislike anything, obey it: I will fore-stall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

*Ham.* Not a whit, we defy augury: there's a special pro-vidence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all: since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes? Let be,— 209

*Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and Attendants with foils, etc.*

*King.* Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[*The KING puts LAERTES'S hand into HAMLET'S.*]

*Ham.* Give me your pardon, sir: I have done you wrong: But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows, and you must needs have heard, How I am punish'd with sore distraction.

What I have done,

215

That might your nature, honour and exception

Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,

220

Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

Who does it, then? His madness: if't be so,  
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;  
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir, in this audience,

225

Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil  
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts  
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house  
And hurt my brother.

*Laer.* I am satisfied in nature,  
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most  
To my revenge: but in my terms of honour  
I stand aloof; and will no reconciliation  
Till by some elder masters of known honour  
I have a voice and precedent of peace'  
To keep my name ungor'd. But till that time  
I do receive your offer'd love like love,  
And will not wrong it.

230

*Ham.* I embrace it freely;  
And will this brother's wager frankly play.—  
Give us the foils; come on.

*Laer.* Come, one for me.  
*Ham.* I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance  
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,  
Stick fiery off indeed.

235

*Laer.* You mock me, sir.

*Ham.* No, by this hand.

*King.* Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,  
You know the wager?

*Ham.* Very well, my lord;  
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

240

*King.* I do not fear it; I have seen you both;  
But since he's better'd, we have therefore odds.

*Laer.* This is too heavy, let me see another.

*Ham.* This likes me well. These foils have all a length?  
[They prepare to play.

245

*Osrr.* Ay, my good lord.

*King.* Set me the stoups of wine upon that table,—

If Hamlet give the first or second hit,  
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,  
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;  
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;  
And in the cup an union shall he throw,  
Richer than that which four successive kings  
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;  
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,

255

260

The trumpet to the cannoneer without,  
 The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,  
*Now the king drinks to Hamlet.*—Come, begin;—  
 And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

*Ham.* Come on, sir.  
*Laer.* Come, my lord. [They play.  
*Ham.* One.  
*Laer.* No.  
*Ham.* Judgment.

*Osr.* A hit, a very palpable hit.  
*Laer.* Well;—again. 266  
*King.* Stay, give me drink.—Hamlet, this pearl is thine;  
 Here's to thy health.—

[Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within.  
 Give him the cup.  
*Ham.* I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile.— 270  
 Come.—Another hit; what say you? [They play.  
*Laer.* A touch, a touch, I do confess.  
*King.* Our son shall win.  
*Queen.* He's fat, and scant of breath.—  
 Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows:  
 The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet. 275

*Ham.* Good madam!  
*King.* Gertrude, do not drink.  
*Queen.* I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.  
*King.* [aside.] It is the poison'd cup; it is too late.  
*Ham.* I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.  
*Queen.* Come, let me wipe thy face. 280  
*Laer.* My lord, I'll hit him now.

*King.* I do not think't.  
*Laer.* [aside.] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.  
*Ham.* Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;  
 I pray you, pass with your best violence:  
 I am afraid you make a wanton of me. 285

*Laer.* Say you so? come on. [They play.  
*Osr.* Nothing, neither way.

*Laer.* Have at you now!

[LAER. wounds HAM.; then, in scuffling, they change  
 rapiers, and HAM. wounds LAER.

*King.* Part them; they are incens'd.  
*Ham.* Nay, come, again. [The QUEEN falls.  
*Osr.* Look to the queen there, ho!  
*Hor.* They bleed on both sides.—How is it, my lord? 290  
*Osr.* How is't, Laertes?

*Laer.* Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric;  
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

*Ham.* How does the queen?

*King.* She swoons to see them bleed.

*Queen.* No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Hamlet,—  
The drink, the drink!—I am poison'd. [Dies. 296]

*Ham.* O villainy!—Ho! let the door be lock'd:  
Treachery! seek it out. [LAERTES falls.

*Laer.* It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;  
No medicine in the world can do thee good; 300  
In thee there is not half an hour of life;  
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,  
Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practice  
Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,  
Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd: 305  
I can no more:—the king, the king's to blame.

*Ham.* The point envenom'd too!—  
Then venom to thy work. [Stabs the KING.

*Osr. and Lords.* Treason! treason!  
*King.* O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt. 310

*Ham.* Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,  
Drink off this potion.—Is thy union here?

Follow my mother. [KING dies.

*Laer.* He is justly serv'd;  
It is a poison temper'd by himself.— 315

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:  
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,

Nor thine on me! [Dies.

*Ham.* Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.—  
I am dead, Horatio.—Wretched queen, adieu!— 320

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,  
That are but mutes or audience to this act,

Had I but time,—as this fell sergeant, death,  
Is strict in his arrest,—O, I could tell you,—

But let it be.—Horatio, I am dead;  
Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright 325

To the unsatisfied.

*Hor.* Never believe it:  
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane,—  
Here's yet some liquor left.

*Ham.* As thou'rt a man,  
Give me the cup; let go; by heaven, I'll have't.—  
O good Horatio, what a wounded name,  
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!  
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,

Absent thee from felicity awhile,  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain, 335  
To tell my story.— [March afar off and shot within.  
What warlike noise is this?

Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,  
To the ambassadors of England gives  
This warlike volley.

Ham. O, I die, Horatio;  
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit: 340  
I cannot live to hear the news from England;  
But I do prophesy the election lights  
On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;  
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,  
Which have solicited.—The rest is silence. [Dies. 345

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart.—Good-night, sweet prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!  
Why does the drum come hither? [March within.

Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors, and others.

Fort. Where is this sight?

Hor. What is it you would see?  
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search. 350

Fort. This quarry cries on havoc.—O proud death,  
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,  
That thou so many princes at a shot  
So bloodily hast struck?

I Amb. The sight is dismal;  
And our affairs from England come too late: 355  
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,  
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,  
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:  
Where should we have our thanks?

Hor. Not from his mouth,  
Had it the ability of life to thank you: 360  
He never gave commandment for their death.  
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,  
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,  
Are here arriv'd, give order that these bodies  
High on a stage be placed to the view; 365  
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world  
How these things came about: so shall you hear  
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;  
Of accidental judgments, casual slayings;  
Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause; 370  
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook

Fall'n on the inventors' heads : all this can I  
Truly deliver.

*Fort.* Let us haste to hear it,  
And call the noblest to the audience.  
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune :  
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,  
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

375

*Hor.* Of that I shall have also cause to speak,  
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more :  
But let this same be presently perform'd,  
Even while men's minds are wild : lest more mischance  
On plots and errors happen.

380

*Fort* Let four captains  
Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage ;  
For he was likely, had he been put on,  
To have prov'd most royally : and, for his passage  
The soldier's music and the rites of war

385

Speak loudly for him.—  
Take up the bodies.—Such a sight as this  
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

Go, bid the soldiers shoot. [A dead march. 390

*[Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies; after which  
a peal of ordnance is shot off.]*



## N O T E S.

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### ACT I.—SCENE I.

*Elsinore . . . the castle.* Elsinore or Helsingor, a seaport town on the island of Zealand, in Denmark, picturesquely situated on the narrowest part of the Sound, twenty-four miles north of Copenhagen. Near to it, on a tongue of land, stands the strongly fortified citadel or castle of Kronborg, built 1577-1585, which commands the entrance to the Baltic. ‘This castle of Elsenor is a quadrant, and one of the goodliest fortifications in that part of the world, both for strength and most curious architecture, and was built by Frederick, this king [Christian IV’s] father. There is in the same, many princely lodgings, and especially one great chamber; it is hanged with tapestry of fresh coloured silke without gold, wherein all the Danish kings are exprest in antique habits according to their several times, with their arms and inscriptions, conteining all their conquests and victories; the roofof is of inlett woodes, and hung full of great branches of brasse for lights’—Stow’s *Annals*, edition 1605, p. 1436.

1. *Me*—emphatic, as spoken by one having a right to demand the watchword of the night.
2. *Long live the king*—this is the watchword of the night.
3. *Upon your hour*—as the appointed hour is about to strike. While Francisco is speaking, the clock strikes twelve.
5. *Bitter cold . . . sick at heart.* Cold is one of the most powerful agents in depressing the animal system, and shows its effect in producing a disinclination to make any effort or exertion, a sickness of the heart. It is, however, probable that the poet intended to indicate that Francisco was under some preternatural condition of chilliness as a first vague hint of the influential presence of the apparition. See *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, II, i, 185, and *Macbeth*, V, iii, 19.
10. *Rivals.* Originally those who draw water from the same river and dwell on opposite banks, and hence antagonists if opposed to each other and companions if on friendly terms; associates, or, as in quarto 1603, partners. Ben Jonson makes Drusus exclaim:

‘Is my father mad?  
Weary of life and rule, lords, thus to heave  
An idol up with praise, make him his mate,  
His rival in the empire’—*Sejanus*, I, ii, 335-338.

12. *Leigemen.* Minsheu says, 'a liege or liefe man is he that oweth legeancie (from *liga*, Italian, a bond or obligation) to his liege lord; and that liege lord signifies he who acknowledges no superior.' *The Dane*—the king of Denmark, as in I, ii, 44.
13. *Give you good-night.* Resolve as grammatically, (God) give (to) you. This adieu, which is in the *Fratricide Avenged* spoken by the First Sentinel, who represents Francisco here, and who avers that he has seen 'a ghost in the front of the castle,' is tauntingly responded to by the Second Sentinel in these words, 'Only be off; perhaps you were born on a Sunday, and can see ghosts of all sorts.' This reference to the (supposed) activity of the imagination in Sunday-born children, an idea which was widely prevalent in Shakespeare's time, acquires some importance when we remember that 23d April 1564, the traditional day of that poet's birth, was a Sunday, as it seems to hint at a settlement of the birth-date and to indicate a Shakespearian origin for the German version of the play above-named.
16. *A piece of him.* 'Horatio calls his hand, as he touches that of the soldier, a piece of himself, because he could not be distinctly seen in the dark shade of the battlement'—Dr C. M. Ingleby's *The Still Lion*, p. 136. Perhaps he means his presence, not his heart.
18. *This thing.* Here is another masterly fore-touch of the vaguely terrible. No name has yet suggested itself for this seeming, shadowy something which has excited fear, yet has not stepped forth into knowableness, and may be but a 'fantasy' born of thought.
20. *Fantasy*—'The shaping spirit of imagination,' fancy. An idea conjured up by the disturbed senses, deceiving the intellect.
21. *Will not let belief take hold of him.* This resistance of the will to the evidence of the sight is a fine preparation for the acceptance of the 'apparition' as a reality when it enters to approve our eyes.
24. *Minutes of this night*—a pleonasm to indicate the careful weariness of the watch to be undergone. Used also by Ford in *Fancies Chaste and Noble*, V, i, 151.
26. *Approve*—from Italian *approvare*, furnish evidence.
28. *Assail . . . fortified.* Soldierly phrases for tell the tale once more which you are so unwilling to regard as true.
30. *Two nights.* The number three, the mysterious proof-number in all things relative to dreams, apparitions, etc., was now within a moment of giving the requisite attestation, and hence the poetic need of this reference to the experiences of the past. Three and its multiples constitute the favourite figures of fantasy and fairy-land, witchcraft and magic.
32. *Last night of all [nights].* 'Of all' signifies especially, particularly.

33. *Yon same star . . . the bell then beating one.* The circumstantial and elaborate description of self-sameness of time is tellingly introduced as an immediate preface to the Ghost's appearance.
37. *Break thee off.* 'For reasons of euphony the ponderous thou is often, ungrammatically, replaced by thee.' *Thee*, thus used, follows imperatives which, being themselves emphatic, require an unemphatic pronoun. The Elizabethans reduced *thou* to *thee*; we have gone further, and reject it altogether. See Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, pars. 205, 212.
39. *A scholar.* One able to speak Latin, the language in which exorcisms (*conjuro te*, etc.) were written and spoken. So in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Night Walker*, Toby proposes to  
 'Call the butler up, for he speaks Latin,  
 And that will daunt the devil'—II, i, 103, 104.

The exorcist employed this palindrome, or line spelling the same backwards as forwards :

'Signa te signa temere me tangis et angis.'

40. This line does not appear in the quarto 1611. Caldecott regards it as an interpolation, and remarks that 'for the purpose of making Horatio's answer more obviously intelligible, our player-editors or the taste of the age interposed this speech of Bernardo's,' and thus defends the old quarto's omission of the line : 'It is natural that the surprise and terror of the speaker should bear some proportion to the degree of his former confidence and incredulity; and the art and address of our poet is shown by making Horatio's answer (a reply not to the last speech and request made, but an observation upon an observation of a preceding speaker) expressive of that alarm in which he was absorbed.'
41. *Harrows.* In quarto 1603 this word is given as *horrors*, that is, stirs a terrible fear within me. It is a peculiarity of Shakespeare to use nouns as verbs, in this manner. Compare 'scandal,' *Cymbeline*, III, iv; 'virgined,' *Coriolanus*, V, iii; 'niggard,' *Julius Caesar*, IV, iii. Modern editors after first folio read *harrows*, troubles and distresses me, taking the force of the word to be a figurative transfer of the action of the harrow upon the clods and furrows to the mind, and making the word akin to *harry*, to tease, vex, torment, and overcome, distract; but taking up, too, the meaning of *harry*, to ravage, and *harass*, to annoy. *Harrow* is derived, (1) from *harrow*, Danish *harr*, German *harke*, a rake; (2) *herry*, to seize; (3) Norman-French *haroo*, an interjection indicating need of help. *Harry* comes from Anglo-Saxon *hergian*, to tease; and *haras* from French *harasser*, to lay waste, to desolate. See 'harrow up,' I, v, 16.
43. *Usurpst—assumest unwarrantedly and takest as thine own.*

52. *On't.* On used for *of*, in the sense of 'about it.'
54. *Avouch*—for avouchment, unmistakable evidence.
55. *Like . . . as thou art to thyself.* So in *The Historie of King Leir and his Three Daughters*, 1605, we have (Hazlitt's *Shakespeare's Library*, vol. vi, p. 327), 'So like to me as I am to myself.'
58. *Norway*—sovereign of Norway.
59. *Parle*—from French *parler*, to speak, as we now use parley. Conference held between enemies with a view to come to terms. So Giles Fletcher uses it, 'When they besiege a towne or fort they offer much *parle*, and send many flattering messages to persuade a surrendering'—*Of the Russe Commonwealth*, 1591. Compare *The Taming of the Shrew*, I, i, 117; *King John*, II, i, 205, 226; *Richard II*, I, i, 192, etc.
60. *Sledded Polacks*—the sledge-driving Polanders. *Sled* is a sledge, a dray. See *Synonymorum Sylva*, 1595. *Polack* is the term constantly used for Pole by Blase de Vignere in his *Chroniques et Annales de Poloigne*, 1573. The old copies give *Pollax*, representing the pronunciation of *Polacks*. In *The Russe Commonwealth*, by Giles Fletcher the elder, 1591, we find this explanation of the term: 'The Polonian, whom the Russe calleth *Laches*, noting the first author or founder of the nation, who was called *Laches* or *Leches*, whereunto is added *Po*, which signifieth people, and so is made *Polaches*; that is, the people or posterite of *Laches*, which the Latins after their manner of writing call *Polanos*' (p. 65). Henry III, in his epitaph by Passeratius, as translated by F. Davison in Camden's *Remaines*, is spoken of as the great king

'That ruled the fickle French and Polacks bold.'

Boswell says it is just possible that *Polax* may be right, 'being put for the person who carried the pole-axe,' which he shows, from a passage in Milton's *Briese History of Muscovie*, was a mark of rank among the Muscovites. 'It must be remembered that Finland, Esthonia, and Livonia, the icy regions along the Baltic, where sledges would be most used, belonged to the kingdom of Poland before they were ceded to Charles XI. of Sweden; and that it was only in 1703 that Russia began to come into contact with the Baltic'—REV. C. E. MOBERLY.

62. *Just.* The quartos 1603 and 1604 have *jump*; the folio gives *just*. In the translation of the *Andria* of Terence by Maurice Kyffin, 1588, we have: 'Comes he this day so jump in the very time of this marriage' (V, i); and in George Chapman's *May Day*, 1611, there occurs:

'Your appointment was jump at three with me.'

*See*—'Ita attemperate venit hodie, he comes so jump, or in

- the very nick to-day; in season, at the very point'—R. Bernard's *Terence*, in English (1598), p. 101, 1607.
65. *Gross and scope*—whole field of thought taken in at one view.
69. *Toils*—causes to overlabour. *Subject*—people.
74. *Toward*—on hand, about to happen, imminent. See V, ii, 352.
82. *This side of our known world*. The eastern hemisphere as distinguished from the western, a somewhat anachronistic phrase.
83. *Compact*. Accent on last syllable, as in *As You Like It*, V, iv, 5.
84. *Law and heraldry*—for heraldic law. George Puttenham, in the *Art of English Poesie*, speaks of a manner of speech wherein 'we seeme to make two of one not thereunto constrained, which therefore we call the figure of Twynnes, the Greeks, *Endiadis*, thus: "Horses and barbes," for *barbed horses*; "with venom and with darts," for *venomous darter*' (1589, p. 147). Compare 'gross and scope,' line 65.
90. *Cov'nant*. This is the reading of the folio 1623; the quarto 1604 reads 'co-mart,' which, as no other instance of the word is known, is understood to signify joint-bargain.
91. *Carriage*—fair interpretation or inference. *Design'd*—aforesaid.
92. *Young Fortinbras, of unimproved mettle hot and full*. Here the wise poet, with admirable preparatory foresight, allows Fortinbras to pass before our imagination in the opening scene, just after the first appearance of the Ghost. He comes still nearer to us in the audience-scene with the king (I, ii, 17), and in the report of Voltimand and Cornelius (II, ii, 68). In IV, iv, he actually enters in person, and announces himself in a few words, as going directly to the performance of his duty; and in V, ii, he reappears, the hero of accomplished duty, to wear the lapsed crown of Denmark. Thus the poet himself rebuts the objection raised by the Rev. Joseph Hunter regarding the introduction of Fortinbras as a new character. These external relations, the old feud resulting in the fresh intrigues in Norway, the diplomatic action between the two sovereignties, and the war with Poland, place the piece in the world-whirl of events, and show us that the tragedy is only a view of a part of the mystery of life.
93. *Mettle hot and full*. So in the *Gentleman's Recreations* hawks are spoken of as 'hardy and full of mettle.'
94. *Skirts*—outlying parts, borderlands.
95. *Shark'd*—gathered together hastily and stealthily. *Scroccare*, to shark up or shift for anything, to snap. By a natural metaphor from the indiscriminate voracity of the fish, we use the words *shark*, to steal, *sharker*, a thief.
- Ib.* *List*—muster-roll. Quarto 1603 reads *sight*.
97. *Stomach*—adventurousness, courage—*Henry V*, IV, iii, 35.
100. *Compulsive*. From the frequentative *compulso*. 'This is the reading of the folios; the quartos give *compulsatory* as if from *compulsator*'. In *Hamlet*, III, iv, 87, and *Othello*, III, iii,

454, we have *compulsive* from *compello*, and these words are not elsewhere used by Shakespeare.

104. *Romage*—rummage, thorough ransack or search, busy and disorderly stir. The term was formerly used among sailors for the complete clearing out of a cargo; making room and the roaming about while doing so.

- 105-122. These lines are omitted in folio 1623; but they occur in all the quartos except that of 1603.

108. *Question of*—the main cause of stir in regard to.

109. *Mote.* *Matt.* vii, 3-5.

111. *The mightiest Julius*—Cæsar. See *Julius Cæsar*, II, iv. Compare also *Julius Cæsar*, II, ii, 18-24, Plutarch's *Cæsar*, and Lucan's *Pharsalia*, by C. Marlow, 1600, i, 507-565.

114. *As stars*, etc. This passage commentators regard as 'hopelessly mutilated.' It has given rise to many conjectures. Rowe printed:

'Stars shone with trains of fire, dews of blood fell,  
Disasters veiled the sun,' etc.

Boaden thought a line is lost, probably of this kind:

'[The heavens too, spoke in silent prodigies,]  
As stars,' etc.

S. W. Singer thinks we might read:

'[And as the earth, so portents fill the sky,]  
As stars,' etc.

Rev. Charles E. Moberly suggests that 'if a line is supposed to be omitted, it would be better to borrow from *Julius Cæsar*, II, ii, and read: '

'[Fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds,]  
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood.'

Perhaps the simplest resolution of the difficulty would be to read: 'Roman streets, astir with,' etc.

115. *The moist star*—the moon, ruler of the tides. See:

'The chaste beams of the watery moon'  
—*Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, i, 162;

'Nine changes of the watery star'—*Winter's Tale*, I, ii, 1;

and Christopher Marlow's *Hero and Leander*, 1590:

'Nor that night-wandering, pale and watery star'—i, 107.

118. *Precurse*—precedents and foreshadowings.

119. *Harbingers.* *Macbeth*, I, iv, 45.

120. *Prologue to the omen coming on*—announcer of the fate im-

pending over the state. ‘That is, the event which happened in consequence of the omens. In the same manner Virgil [says]:

“Cui pater intactam dederat primisque jugaret,  
*Ominibus*”—*Aeneid*, i, 349.

“(To whom her father gave her, virgin-pure,  
And with the earliest omens joined her sure.”)

*Ominibus*, i.e., nuptiis; viz., the event which was the consequence of the omens—UPTON.

- 122. *Climature*. From *clima*, region. Inhabitants of the same zone or region.
- 137. *Partisan*—halbert, a leading-staff; French *pertuisane*, the piercer.
- 146. *Summons* (French *semonce*, Latin *submoneas*)—the first word of the legal Latin in which a summons was couched.
- 150. *In sea . . . or air*. The Platonists supposed that there were spirits appropriate to earth, air, fire, and water, the four elements.
- 151. *Extravagant*—exceeding prescribed bounds. *Erring*, wandering.
- 154. *It faded*, etc. ‘Ghosts, or rather devils, assume an airy, thin, and therefore fluxative body, which by heat is extenuated, and consequently dissipated, but condensed and confined by cold, insomuch as not to be seen by the heatful light of the day; whereupon grew that opinion, how ghosts and other apparitions of terror did wander about only in the night, and vanished with the morning’—George Sandys’ *Ovid’s Metamorphoses, ‘Commentary on Book XV’* (1632). Compare I, ii, 218-220.
- 155. *Gaint*—as used here and in II, ii, 489; III, iv, 51; as well as in *Romeo and Juliet*, IV, i, 113; *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, V, i, 75; *Richard II*, III, iv, 29, is a preposition of time=at the time that.
- 159. *Strike*—exert a baleful influence; injure.
- 160. *Takes*—seizes so as to make the subject of disease, fascinates and inflicts injury. *See*:

‘And there he blasts the trees, and takes the cattle’  
—*Merry Wives of Windsor*, IV, iv, 32.

‘Strike her young bones,  
Ye taking airs, with lameness’—*King Lear*, II, iv, 166.

## SCENE II.

- 4. *Brow of woe*—mourning brow. *See ‘brow of youth’—Lear, I, iv, 306.*
- 10. *Defeated*—marred. *See ‘defeat thy favour’—Othello, I, iii, 346.*

11. *Auspicious . . . dropping.* Compare Δακρύει γελάσασα, *Iliad*, vi, 484, 'smiling tearfully.'
29. *Bed-rid*—Saxon *be-drian*, to bewitch or fascinate; but confounded in etymology and meaning with *bed* and *rid*, as 'one borne on a bed.' Compare *Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, 412.
49. Probably this line should be read with *is* and *to* transposed, or—

'Than is thy father to the throne of Denmark.'

53. *Coronation.* In quarto 1603 funeral rites is mentioned as the cause of Laertes' coming, but this has been judiciously altered in the later texts.
- 58-60. *Wrung . . . consent.* Omitted in folio 1623.
62. *Take thy fair hour.* Like Horace's 'Carpe diem'—*Carm.*, xi, 8.
65. *Kin . . . kind.* Compare W. Rowley's *Search for Money*, 1602, 'I would he were not so neere us in kindred, then sure he would be neerer in kindness'—*Percy Soc. Ed.*, p. 5:

'In kind a father, not in kindnessse'—*Gorbuduc*, I, i.

'Traitor to kin and kind, to sire and me'—*Ibid.*, IV, i.

'Tumultuous wars  
Shall kin with kin and kind with kind confound'  
*Richard II*, IV, i, 14x.

- 'More than kin,' related both by blood and marriage; 'kind,' full of good feeling. Hamlet is step-son to Claudius as well as nephew, and so 'a little more than kin,' but he is 'less than kind' not only in affection to the usurper, but in not being his son by *kind*.
67. *Too much i' the sun.* It is probable that a quibble is intended between *sunne* and *sonne*. There is an old English proverb quoted in Wither's *Abuses Stript and Whipt*:

'Out of God's blessing into the warm sun;'

and referred to in *King Lear* as—

'The common saw;  
Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st  
To the warm sun'—II, ii.

- It there, as well as here, signifies 'forlorn,' with none of the comforts remaining which arise out of the charities of kindred. There is a reference to the phrase in *Psalm cxxi*, 6.
81. *'Haviour*—appearance, bearing.
82. *Forms, moods, shows of grief.* Some editors read *modes*; quarto 1604 has *shapes*. *Forms* are the customary appearances, *moods*, the changeful musings of the saddened mind; *shows*, external trappings, mourning-dress which was frequently spoken of as a 'shape.'

85. *I have . . . woe.* Compare:

‘My grief lies all within;  
And those external manners of laments  
Are merely shadows to the unseen grief  
That swells with silence in my tortured soul.  
There lies the substance’—*Richard II*, IV, i, 294-298.

92. *Obsequious*—(1) dutiful, (2) funereal.

1b. *Persuere.* The accent is on the second syllable, as in *King John*, II, i, 421, and *As You Like It*, V, ii, 3.

113. *Wittenberg* is a fortified city, triple-gated, in the province of Saxony in Prussia, situated on a sandy level on the banks of the Elbe. Its university (which has been since 1817 united to that of Halle) was founded and endowed in 1502 by the Elector Frederic the Wise. In 1508 Luther was appointed Professor of Philosophy therein, and it was on the gates of its university church that he, 31st October 1517, fixed the celebrated ninety-five theses which ultimately led to the Reformation. Giordano Bruno, who had lived in England 1583-1586, and been patronised by Sir Philip Sidney, Lord Buckhurst, the Earl of Leicester, and (Fulke Greville) Lord Brooke of Warwick, became Professor of Philosophy in the University of Wittenberg, which he called ‘the Athens of Germany,’ and it is not improbable, as Benno Tschischwitz, in his *Shakespeare-Forschungen*, i, ‘Hamlet,’ 1868, says, that *Hamlet* owes not a little of its philosophy and its interest to Shakespeare’s knowledge of the tenets and his remembrances of the character of that martyr-thinker. In Falkson’s *Romance of Giordano Bruno*, 1846, p. 289, the same idea is introduced. The special works of Bruno to which *Hamlet* may be indebted are *Il Candelajo*, a comedy, 1582; and *Degli Eroici Furori*, dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, in which the author teaches the militant mission of the will in man’s struggles to attain to a knowledge of truth, beauty, and goodness. ‘Wittenberg, the university dear to the Protestant heart of England from its memories of Luther,’ and, as the refuge-house for the time of a strange thinker whom he had known, dear to the imagination of Shakespeare himself, is very fittingly—despite the anachronism—referred to as the college in which Hamlet had studied and dwelt.

113, 119, 164, 168. In F. J. Furnivall’s Early English Text Society’s (1870) re-issue of Andrew Borde’s *Introduction of Knowledge*, we learn ‘that out of Denmarke a man may go into Saxsony. The chefe cyte or town of Saxsony is called Witseburg [Wittenberg], which is a universitie’—p. 164 (1542).

113. In quarto 1603 the following fine lines, reminding us of Horace’s ‘animæ dimidium meæ’—*Carm.*, I, iii, 8, occur here:

‘Wee hold it most unmeet and unconvenient,  
Being the joy and half-heart of your mother.’

124. *In grace whereof . . . thunder.* ‘This seems to have been the first appearance of the king in public, after his usurping the crown and marrying his sister[-in-law], and is therefore celebrated as a gala day. He therefore seizes an opportunity to compliment Hamlet’s concession, as he would fain term [or interpret] it, in his favour, by firing off the cannon to his honour at every toast’—Thomas Davies’ *Critical Observations*, vol. iii, p. 12.
127. *Rouse.* From the Danish *ruus*, a surfeit in drinking, a deep draught, a bumper, which, going round all the company at a health-drinking, produces a *carouse*.
129. *Too too.* This is an intensive adverb denoting *exceedingly*. It is used in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, II, ii, and 2 *Henry VI*, in this sense, and also by Shakespeare’s contemporaries. See J. O. Halliwell’s article in *Shakespeare Society Papers*, vol. i (1844), pp. 39-43.
132. *Canon 'gainst self-slaughter.* The sixth commandment:
- ‘Against self-slaughter  
There is a prohibition so divine  
That cravens my weak hand’—*Cymbeline*, III, iv, 78-80.
- See also III, iii, 11; *Lear*, IV, vi, 75; *Julius Cæsar*, V, i, 101.
140. *Hyperion* was properly speaking the father of the sun. Damm explains the name ὁ ἡλέπ̄ ἥμας λύν Ηλίος—the sun going over us. The name, however, came to be applied to Apollo, son of Jupiter and Latona, the god of poetry, music, medicine, augury, archery, and all the fine arts. He was represented as uniting the perfection of manly strength and beauty in his single self. The Apollo Belvedere shows the splendid conception of masculine power and form to which the Greek sculptors love to give existence. Though the penultimate, Hyperion, is long (*Odyssey*, i, 8), yet it has seldom commended itself to English verse so. It is used in *Henry V*, IV, i, 292; *Timon of Athens*, IV, iii, 184; *Titus Andronicus*, V, ii, 56; *Troilus and Cressida*, II, iii, 207; and again in *Hamlet*, III, iv, 57, with the penultimate short. Though Sir William Alexander and Drummond of Hawthornden use it in the classical form, Spenser, Gray, Akenside, Keats, etc., use it as here.
- 1b. *Satyr.* Lucian in his *Council of the Gods* describes the Satyrs as a bold, rough, shaggy, species of beings, with pointed ears and little sprouting horns. They had goatlike feet, and were wild, amorous, and given to wine.
141. *Beteem*—Dutch *betaeman*, Anglo-Saxon *ge-teman*, to allow, permit, suffer. It occurs in Spenser’s *Fairie Queen*, II, viii, 19; in Golding’s *Ovid’s Metamorphoses*, x, 157, as a translation of *dignatur*, regard as worthy; and in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, I, i, 131.
142. *Heaven and earth.* *Deut.* xxxi, 1; *Isa.* i, 2.

146. *Frailty . . . woman.* A condensation at once of Virgil's—

'Varium et mutabile semper  
Foemina'—*Aeneid*, iv, 569;

and of the pungent lines of Sophocles :

'Ορκούς ἔγω γυναικός εἰς θάρη γράψω.

'I write the vows that women swear  
On water which no tracings bear.'

149. *Niobe*—the daughter of Tantalus, king of Lydia, and of Dione, daughter of Atlas. She, proud of her numerous offspring, despised Latona. Apollo and Diana, Latona's children, to avenge their mother's wrongs, slew, the one all the sons, and the other all the daughters (save Chloris), of Niobe, who, smitten mute and motionless with grief at this sudden calamity, was converted into a rock. This rock was transported by a whirlwind to the summit of Mount Sipylus in Lydia, and from it tears flowed for ever.
150. *Discourse of reason*—power of arguing, inferring or drawing conclusions from premises; the logical faculty. *See*:

'Such large discourse,  
Looking before and after, . . .  
That capability and god-like reason'—IV, iv, 35-37.

Bishop Wordsworth quotes in illustration of the poet's meaning, the following pertinent passage from Cicero's *De Officiis*: 'Homo autem, quod rationis est particeps (per quam consequentia cernit, causas rerum videt, earumque progressus et quasi antecessiones non ignorat, similitudines comparat, rebusque presentibus adjungit atque advertit futuras) facile totius vitæ cursum videt, ad eamque degendum preparat res necessarias.' 'But man, who is partaker of reason, whereby he seeth sequels, behouldeth grounds and causes of things, is not ignorant of these proceedings, and, as it were, their foregoings, compareth semblances, and with things present joyneth and knitteth things to come, doth soone espie the course of his whole life, and to the leading thereof perceiveth things necessarie'—M. T. Cicero's *The Three Bookes of Duties*, turned out of Latin into English by Nicolas Grimald, 1583, book i, fol. 6.

153. *Hercules*—the son of Jupiter and Alcmena, famous for his feats of strength, courage, and endurance, clearness of mind, and energy of will.

157. *Dexterity*—cunning haste.

179. *Hard*—near to, close, as in *Acts xviii*, 7.

- 180-181. *Funeral baked-meats . . . marriage-tables.* Massinger has, 'The same rosemary that serves for the funeral will serve for the wedding'—*Old Law*, IV, i, 35. Cotgrave explains

- '*Pasterie*, f. (All kinds of) pies or baked-meats; pasterie works; also the making of paste-meats,' 1611.
182. *Dearest foe*—greatest, worst, direst.
185. *In my mind's eye*. Similarly Telemachus in the *Odyssey*, i, 115, is represented as 'Οσσόμενος τατέρ' ἐσθλὸν ἐν φρεσὶν.  
 'In his mind's eye his father dear beholding.'
- Chaucer uses 'thilke eyen of his minde.' In Davies' *Microcosmos*, 1605, 'Through their closed eies their mind's eye peeps.' Shakespeare elsewhere uses, 'Mine eye is in my mind'—Sonnet 113; 'the eye of mind'—*Lucrece*.
193. *Attend*—'animum adverte'—marke; be ye attent, give ear; understand yee, hearken'—Richard Bernard's *Terence*, in English, p. 174, ed. 1607, first published in 1598.
200. *Cap-a-pé* (French *cap-a-pied*)—from head to foot. Line 228.
230. *Beaver*. *Baviera*, the chin-piece of a casque or head-piece'—Florio's *World of Words*, 1598. Worcester says from French *buvoir*, because it enabled the wearer to drink. Derived by some from French *bavière*, a bib.
245. *Gape*—not *yawn* or *open*, but 'yell,' 'roar.' Compare: 'A gaping pig'—*Merchant of Venice*, IV, i, 54.
248. *Tenable*. Quarto 1603 reads *tenible*, that of 1604 *tenable*, folio 1623 *treble*. Though the last is probably a mere misprint, it has been explained by Caldecott to mean, 'Impose a three-fold obligation of silence,' and has been illustrated by reference to V, i, 230:
- ‘O, treble woe  
 Fall ten times treble on that cursed head.’
- ‘Trebles you o'er’—*Tempest*, II, i.
- ‘I would be trebled twenty times myself’—*Merchant of Venice*, III, ii.
257. *Foul deeds will rise*. ‘Be sure your sins will find you out’—*Num. xxii*, 53.

## SCENE III.

11. *Crescent*—undergoing development. Laertes, following the example of his father, is here speaking *crib*; for Herodotus (iii, 134) said long ago 'The mind grows with the growth of the body' ('αὐξανόμενῷ τῷ σώματι συναίξονται καὶ αἱ φρένες').
12. *Temple*—*John* ii, 21; *I Cor.* iii, 16, 17.
15. *Cauel*—cautelle, vile, craft, subtilty, deceit. 'There is no cautele under heaven, whereby the libertie of making or revoking his testament can be utterly taken away'—Swinburne's *Treatise on Wills* (1590), p. 61—W. L. RUSHTON.
18. *Subject to his birth*—liable to the laws affecting the alliances of princes.
20. *Carve for himself*—do what he likes. Rushton in his *Testamentary Language of Shakespeare*, p. 50, quotes from Swinburne's *Treatise on Wills*, 1590, 'It is not lawful for legataries

- to *carve for themselves*, taking their legacies at their own pleasure.
23. *That body . . . the head*—the state.
30. *Credent*—readily believed, credulous.
36. *Chariest* (Anglo-Saxon *cearig*, careful; German *karg*, niggardly)—coyest, most cautious. Perhaps, ‘Th’ unchariest,’ as H. N. Hudson suggests.
38. *Calumnious strokes*. Compare Hamlet’s saying, III, i, 135.
39. *Canker*—the *Lorotænia rosana*. See *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, II, ii, 3; *Twelfth Night*, II, i, 115; *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, I, i, 43.
42. *Contagious blastments*—injuries derived from contact with anything that can harm. *Imminent*—readily received.
50. *Dalliance* (Dutch *dollen*, to trifle, tamper, indulge one’s self)—self-indulgence.
51. *Recks not his own read*—pays no attention to his own teaching; *recks from recan, curare*, to give heed. *Matt. xxiii, 3, 4; Rom. ii, 19-21; As You Like It*, II, iv, 81.
- 58-80. W. L. Rushton in his *Shakespeare’s Euphuism*, pp. 46, 47, points out the following close resemblances between the advice of Polonius, and Euphues’ counsel to Philantus in Lyl’s *Euphues and his England*, 1579: line 58, ‘If these few precepts I give thee bee observed,’ 59, ‘Be not lavish of thy tongue;’ 64, ‘Every one that shaketh thee by the hand is not joyned to thee in heart;’ 65, ‘Be not quarrelsome for every lyght occasion . . . Beware,’ etc.; 68, ‘It shall be then better to hear what they say, than to speak what thou thinkest’—p. 246, Arber’s *Reprint*; 70, ‘Let thy attire bee conely, but not costly’—*Ibid.*, 39, 75. Mr Edward Scott has found in the second edition of Caxton’s *Game of Chesse* this sentence, ‘My friend borrowed money of me, and I have lost my friend and my money’ (1475?).
59. *Give thy thoughts no tongue*. ‘This,’ Lord Chedworth says, ‘may remind us of the celebrated advice which Sir Henry Wotton, in his letter to Milton, says was given to Alberto Scipione, an old Roman courtier, “*I pensieri* stretti ed il viso sciolto,” i.e. (as Sir Henry Wotton translates it), Your thoughts close and your countenance loose, will go all over the world’—*Notes on Shakespeare’s Plays*, p. 247.
81. *Season*—bring into usefulness.
- 99, 106. *Tenders*—(1) proffers; (2) promises.
102. *Unsifted*—without experience.
- 107, 109. *Tender*—(1) regard; (2) show me to be.
- 111, 112. *Fashion*—(1) manner; (2) changeableness.
115. *Springes to catch woodcocks*. ‘Snares for simpletons’—a proverb quoted by Stephen Gosson in his *Schoole of Abuse*. ‘When comedy comes upon the stage, Cupid settis upp a springe for woodcockes, which are entangled ere they desrie the line, and caught before they mistrust the snare’ (1579).

- Arber's *Reprint*, p. 72; and popularised by Henry Parrot in his '*Lacquei Ridiculosi*, or Springes for Woodcocks,' 1613.
117. *Lends the tongue vows.* Coleridge would fill up this defective line by introducing 'go to' after vows, or 'mark you' after daughter.
118. *Extinct*—exhausted, quenched, put out. Used by Shakespeare only here and in *Richard II*, I, iii, 222, for *extinguished*, which he does not use.
119. *A-making.* 'Before the participle present *a* and *an* have the force of a gerund'—Ben Jonson's *English Grammar*.
133. *Slander*—misuse. 'We have in *Cymbeline* a similar figurative use of *slander*. Cloten says of Imogen:

"But  
Disdaining me, and throwing favours on  
The low Posthumus, *slanders* so her judgment," etc. [iii, v, 74-76]  
—S. W. SINGER.

## SCENE IV.

2. *Eager*—from the French *aigre*, sharp, keen.
8. *Wake*—indulgence in late-houred revels. *Rouse*—drink in bumpers (I, ii, 127).
9. *Wassail*—courtly festivity, a drink-revel. In *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence*, p. 126, ed. 1634, Richard Verstegan gives an account of the origin of this term, of which we quote a modern version: 'Rowena, the daughter of Hengist, was very beautiful. When she was introduced by her father at the banquet of the British king, Vortigern (A.D. 446), she advanced gracefully and modestly towards him, bearing in her hand a golden goblet filled with wine. Young people, even of the highest rank, were accustomed to wait upon their elders, or those to whom they wished to show respect, and therefore the appearance of Rowena as cup-bearer at the feast was neither unbecoming nor unseemly. And when Rowena came near unto Vortigern, she said, in her own Saxon language, *Waes heal, hlafrord Conung*—which means, "Health be to thee, my lord king." Vortigern did not understand the salutation of Rowena, but the words were explained to him by an interpreter. *Drinc heal*—"Drink thou health"—was the customary answer; and the memory of the event was preserved in England by the *wassail-cup*—a cup full of spiced wine or good ale, which was handed round from guest to guest at the banquet and the festival'—Francis Palgrave's *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, p. 35.
- 1b. *Upspring.* This is often explained as 'the English rendering of the German *hüpfauf*; according to Elze, the last and consequently the wildest dance at the old German merry-makings.' In *Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany*, attributed to Chapman, Bohemia says:

'We Germans have no changes in our dances;  
An Almain and an upspring, that is all'—III, i, 162, 163.

Dr Johnson regards *swaggering upspring* as a 'blustering upstart' (*parvenu*); and Pope displaced *upspring* by *upstart*; but it is more probable that it is here used as a sarcastic synonym for *usurper*. Shakespeare always uses words with a nice appreciation of their emotional suggestiveness. Hamlet is here speaking scornfully of his father's successor, and having latent in his mind the feeling that he was the offspring and proper successor of the previous monarch, he, with his tendency to bring together opposites, contrasts and characterises the king, whose usurping ambition had made him both sovereign of and stepfather to the offspring of 'the buried majesty of Denmark,' as 'the swaggering upspring,' whose coarse taste led him to revelry, luxury, and show.

- 10-12. *And as he drains . . . pledge.* In John Stow's *Annals* we have this report recorded on the authority of Maister William Segar, Garter King-at-Arms: 'Thursday, the 14th day [of July 1603], . . . that afternoone the king [of Denmark] went aboord the English ship [which was lying in the Sound just off Elsinore], and had a basket prepared for him upon the upper decks, which were hung with an awning of cloth of tissue; everye healthe reported sixe, eight, or ten shot of great ordnance, so that during the king's abode [stay] the ship discharged 160 shot'—p. 1436, ed. 1605—F. J. FURNIVALL.

10. *Rhenish* (from Latin *Rhenus*, the Rhine)—Rhine wine (see V, i, 165), wine made from the grapes which grow on the banks of the Rhine (German *Rhein*); but most generally applied to those produced in the Rheingau, a district lying between Mayence and Bonn, which, being protected from the north and east winds by mountains, and exposed to the mid-day sun, ripens the richest vine-crops in Germany.

14. *Native here, and to the manner born.* From Barrow's *Statutes*, 276, we learn that this was a legal phrase. 'Our natives, as being born within the manor.' Shakespeare frequently puns on *manner* and *manor*. See *Love's Labour's Lost*, I, i, 206.

- 15, 16. *A custom . . . observance.* 'It were superfluous to tell you of all superfluities that were used; and it would make a man sick to heare of their drunken healths; use hath brought it into a fashion, and fashion made it a habit, which ill beseems our nation to imitate'—Wm. Segar, quoted by John Stow, *Annals*, p. 1437, ed. 1605—F. J. FURNIVALL.

- 17-38. These lines are omitted in folio 1623; S. W. Singer thinks 'lest they should give offence to Anne of Denmark.'

18. *Tax'd*—censured, satirised. *As You Like It*, II, vii, 11, 86.

19. *Swinish*—perhaps, as the Clarendon editors suggest, with a

- punning reference to Sweyn, a common name of Danish kings. See *Macbeth*, I, vii, 67.
- 24-35. *For some vicious mole . . . take corruption.* *Eccles.* x, 1.
27. *O'ergrowth of some complexion*—excess of any one of the four humours—blood, phlegm, choler, melancholy. Compare:

‘What war so cruel, or what siege so sore,  
As that which strong affections do apply  
Against the fort of reason evermore’

*Fairie Queen*, II, xi, 1.

36. *The dram of eale . . . scandal.* No fewer than forty-seven conjectural emendations of this passage, which is evidently corrupt, have been suggested; for *eale* Theobald would read *base*; S. W. Singer, *bale*; Caldecott, Knight, and Collier, *ill*; Dyce, *evil*; *ail*, *ale*, *vile*, *bad*, have also been proposed. The lines 17-38 do not occur in the first quarto 1603, or the first folio 1623; *eale* is the reading of quarto 1604, *ease* of quarto 1611. For ‘of a doubt,’ Theobald would read *of worth out*; Steevens (concurred in by Caldecott, Knight, and Collier), *often doubt*; Arrowsmith, *often draw*; Dyce, *oft debase*; Mason and Mitford, *oft corrupt*; S. W. Singer, *oft a doubt*; and Swynfen Jervis, *oft subdue*. Among other attempts to bring the phrase into intelligibility we may note *soil with doubt, oft adopt, of good out, overcloud, of a pound*, etc. Dr C. M. Ingleby, one of the most ingenious and cultured of Shakespearian critics, places this passage among those which we need scarcely hope to set right by the mere exercise of ingenuity and taste. It is venturesome to propose any fresh emendation here; still, as desperate cases require desperate remedies (*Hamlet*, IV, iii, 9), we shall not, like the Clarendon Press editors, ‘leave this hopelessly corrupt passage as it stands in the two earliest quartos,’ but essay a fresh attempt. Might we not read:

‘This dram of *talc*  
Doth all the noble substance *overdaue*,  
To its own scandal.’

*Talc* was a wonderful cosmetic and preservative of the complexion, much in use in Shakespeare’s time. Ben Jonson mentions *ladies*,

‘That for the oil of *talc* dare spend  
More than citizens dare lend’—*The Forest*, Song viii.

Jasper Mayne, in *The City Match*, also tells us of—

‘Mrs Simple and her husband, who  
Do verily ascribe the German war  
And the late persecutions, to curling,  
False teeth, and oil of *talc*’—II, i, 15-18.

*Hamlet* tells Ophelia, ‘I have heard of your paintings too,  
well enough; God has given you one face, and you make

'yourselves another' (III, i, 141, 142). I suppose that Hamlet means, As cosmetics, though used as heighteners of beauty, really destroy 'the noble substance' (the features) overdaubed with them, so do bad habits, even when slightly indulged in, scandalise a nation or a person. *1 Cor.* v, 9.

39. *Angels and ministers of grace.* *Heb.* i, 14.
54. *We.* This ought in grammatical strictness to be *us*; but Dr Abbott says, that 'after a conjunction and before an infinitive we often find *I*, *thou*, etc., where in Latin we should have *me*, *te*, etc. The conjunction seems to be regarded as introducing a new sentence, instead of connecting one clause with another. Hence the pronoun is put in the nominative; and a verb is, perhaps, to be supplied from the context'—*Shakespearian Grammar*, p. 143.
65. *Fee*—price, worth; Anglo-Saxon *feohe*, German *vieh* (like *pecunia*, money, from Latin *pecus*), cattle, then money, property, or estate; perhaps connected with *fief*.
71. *Beetles*—juts out, overhangs. 'The verb *to beetle* is apparently of Shakespeare's creation'—S. W. SINGER. As an adjective it occurs in Sidney's *Arcadia*, Book I, 'Hills lift up their beetle-brows,' as if they would overlook the pleasantness of their under-prospect.
- 75-78. Omitted in folio 1623.
82. *Artery.* In quartos *arture*; in folios *artire*. The medical opinion of Shakespeare's day may be seen in this passage from Botero's *Relations of the World*: 'Nature in the framing of the world, did not show more wonderful providence in disposing veins and arteries throughout the body for the apt conveyance of the blood and spirit from the liver and heart to each part thereof'—ii.
83. *The Nemean lion's nerve.* The lion which Hercules slew in the valley of Nemea in Argolis, between Cleonæ and Phlius. This monstrous lion was the invulnerable offspring of Typhon and Echidna. After vainly using his club and arrows against him, Hercules strangled the fierce animal with his own hands, and returned to Tiryns, his allocated dwelling-place, bearing the carcase on his shoulders. For the story itself, beautifully told, see the twenty-fifth Idyll of Theocritus. Pronounce as a dissyllable *Nem-yan*, as in 'Thus dost thou hear the Nemean lion roar'—*Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, i, 90.

### SCENE V.

*A more remote part of the platform.* Tschischwitz suggests that this should be *A wilderness*; Schroeder, *A graveyard*, with the church in the background. Hamlet has been led thus far, and will go 'no further.'

- 10-13. *Doom'd . . . purg'd away.* This is rather a pagan than a Roman Catholic purgatory. At least we read in Virgil:

'Aliæ panduntur inanes  
Suspense ad ventos; alia sub gurgite vasto  
Infectum elutur scelus aut exuritur igni'—*Aeneid*, vi, 740.

'Some hang aloft in open view  
For winds to pierce them through and through,  
While others purge their guilt deep-dyed  
In burning fire or whelming tide'—CONINGTON.

13. *I am forbid*, etc. In Lucian's *Dialogue of Menippus and Philonides*, when the latter asks the former to reveal the laws and decrees of the infernal judge, Menippus replies that it is not lawful for him to disclose in the upper world what he had learned in the regions below, or to divulge their secrets, lest Rhadamanthus should punish him for so doing. This dialogue was issued for 'a merry pastime in English verse and Latin prose,' prior to Shakespeare's birth.

21. *Blazon*—publication, revelation. See *Twelfth Night*, I, v, 291.

29. *As swift as meditation*. This somewhat peculiar phrase seems to be glanced at in the prologue to *Wily Beguiled*—a play in which there are many allusions to, imitations of, and quotations from Shakespeare, written about 1596, though 1606 is the date of the earliest known printed copy—where the Juggler says, 'I'll make him fly swifter than meditation.'

32. *The fat weed . . . Lethe wharf*. Asphodel was planted on the graves and around the tombs of the dead, and hence the Greeks fabled that the Stygian plain consisted of meadows of asphodel or king's spear. See Homer's *Odyssey*, xi, 539, and :

'Soon they came to the meadows of asphodel,  
Where the shadowy souls of dead heroes dwell'—xxiv, 11, 12.

58. *But soft . . . the morning air*. Similarly the vision of Anchises to Aeneas says :

'Jamque vale; torquet medios nox humida cursus  
Et me sævus equis Oriens affavit anhelis'—*Aeneid*, v, 739.

'And now farewell; dew-sprinkled night  
Has scaled Olympus' topmost height,  
I catch their panting breath afar,  
The steeds of Morning's cruel star'—CONINGTON.

59. *Sleeping within mine orchard*. 'Adjoining to a royal palace, which stands about half a mile from Cronberg, is a garden which our curiosity led us to visit, as it is called Hamlet's garden, and is said by tradition to be the very spot where the murder of his father was perpetrated. The house is of modern date, and is situated at the foot of a sandy ridge near the sea. The garden occupies the side of the hill, and is laid out in terraces, rising one above another'—Archdeacon Wm. Coxe's *Travels in Russia, Poland, Sweden, and Denmark*, 1787, vol. v, p. 283.

61. *Secure*—care-free, unsuspecting, unguarded. *Judges*, xviii, 7, 10; also 'Securus amorum Germanæ'—*Aeneid*, i, 350.

62. *Hebenon*. By some regarded as *ebony* (*ebenum*), a species of

diospyros, which has a pungent taste, and was in former times used medicinally as a laxative and sudorific; by others as *henbane* (of which *hebon* and *hebenon* are merely modifications) or *Hyoscyamus niger*, which is a narcotic, having the power of numbing the faculties, causing heat in the throat, giddiness, dimness of sight, and delirium; a plant, from the wrong use of which death sometimes happens. Of course the operation of this poisonous juice is poetically exaggerated here. In Pliny's *Natural History* it is stated that 'an oil made from the seeds' of the plant *ebenus*, 'instilled into the ears, injures the understanding' (XXV, iv.).

63. *In the porches of mine ears did pour.* It was currently reported that the death of Francis II of France, husband of Mary, Queen of Scots, was caused by Ambrose Paré, the father of modern surgery in France, through his pouring poison into the porches of his ear while treating him for an abscess in that organ, 5th December 1560.
69. *Eager droppings*, etc. Sour, acid, and so capable of producing, to quote Sir John Floyer, M.D., a 'putredinous ferment,' which 'coagulates all humours, as milk with rennet is turned.'
71. *Tetter*—scurf, as in Dryden's version of Virgil's *Georgics*:  
'A scabby tetter on their pelts did stick'—iii, 671.  
Shakespeare uses the word as a verb in *Coriolanus*, III, i.
72. *Lazar-like*—resembling a lazarus, a beggar like Lazarus, 'full of sores'—*Luke*, xvi, 20.
77. *Unhousel'd*—without having partaken of the sacrament (*hostia*, sacrifice). The Anglo-Saxon for sacrament is *hāsel*.
- Ib.* *Unanointed* is Pope's reading. *Disappointed* is that of the early copies. *Appointed* means furnished, equipped, ready, prepared; and *dis*, before adjectives, has the sense of negation, as in *dissimilar*, unlike.
- Ib.* *Unanel'd*—without extreme unction. 'They' (the Russians) 'hold three sacramentes of baptisme, the Lord's Supper, and the last annoiling or unction'—Giles Fletcher's *Russe Commonwealth*, 1591, p. 98. In the *Antigone* of Sophocles we have a similar triad of terms:

'Ἐχεις δε τῶν κάτωθεν ἐνθάδ' αὐθ θεῶν  
·Αμαρον δικτέριστον ἀνθοτον νεκυν—1057, 1058.

'Kept her on earth, unmindful of the gods,  
Ungraced, unburied, an unhallowed corse'  
—*Sophocles*, translated by Kev. Thomas Franklin, D.D., 1809.

83. *Luxury*—always used by Shakespeare as meaning wantonness.
89. *Matin*—for matin, morning, with allusion to *matins*, morning worship beginning at three o'clock.
- 89, 90. *The glowworm . . . uneffectual fire.* The glowworm is the *Lampyris noctiluca*. 'The fading of the glowworm's light at

the approach of day contradicts a curious fact mentioned by White [of Selborne, in his *Observations on Insects and Vermes*], that by observations made on two glowworms, brought from a field to a bank in the garden, they appeared to put out their lamps between eleven and twelve and shine no more for the rest of the night.' Shakespeare has also 'mistaken the sex of the insect here; for the glowworm we are accustomed to admire is the *female* insect, about three-quarters of an inch in length, of a dull earthy-brown colour in the upper parts, and beneath more or less tinged with rose colour, with the two or three last joints of the body of a pale whitish sulphur colour, with a very slight cast of green, and from this the phosphoric light proceeds.' . . . But 'the licence of using natural objects in either sex is generally allowable in poetry, except, perhaps, such as is strictly descriptive'—*The Zoology of the English Poets corrected by the Writings of Modern Naturalists*, by Robert Hasell Newell, B.D., 1845. 'The female glowworm crawls upon the ground, and the male wings his flight through the air. The light of the former is beautiful and brilliant, that of the latter comparatively inconspicuous.' To the female belongs—

‘the light  
The glowworm hangs out to allure  
Her mate to her green bower at night’—THOMAS MOORE.

The light becomes, as Dr Johnson remarks, ‘uneffectual only at the approach of morn, in like manner as the light of a candle would be at mid-day.’

98. *Table of my memory.* Compare, ‘the table of thine heart,’ *Prov.* iii, 3; and δέλτροις φρενῶ (on the tablets of the heart), in the *Prometheus* of Æschylus, 789.
116. *Hillo*, etc. ‘This is an imitation of the manner in which falconers used to call down a flying hawk’—REV. JOHN HUNTER, M.A. In Marston’s *Malecontent*, 1604, we have this cry and a phrase used at line 150 combined:

‘Hillo, ho ! ho ! ho ! arte there, olde true-penny?’—III, iii, 36.

And another portion, S. W. Singer says, is given in Tyro’s *Roaring Megge*, 1598:

‘Come, come, bird, come; pox on you, you can mute.’

136. *Saint Patrick.* In his *Genealogical Table of the Kings of Denmark*, the Rev. Wm. Betham places Ruric in the year A.D. 434, and it was during the reign of this mythic king that Horvendile’s murder is said to have occurred. In 432 St Patrick was consecrated as a bishop by Pope Celestine, so that he had just then risen to his sainthood. It is difficult to guess why the Irish saint was invoked by Hamlet the Dane, unless it were that in 1598 Ireland was in insurrection, and Essex had been sent over to quell the revolt, and so the phrase had

acquired a temporary popularity as an asseveration. Does Hamlet in this invocation indicate that—

'As Irish earth doth poison poisonous beasts'

—*The True Trojans*, III, i, 13,

he has a longing for the aid of St Patrick to purge Denmark of similar creatures? The Rev. C. E. Moberly suggests that it was because he was 'the saint of all blunders and confusions.' The proper Danish saint is St Ansarius; but St Patrick was the keeper of purgatory, and had just allowed the revealer to have leave.

- 150. *True-penny*—a cant name for a genuinely honest fellow. It may be a vulgarism for the Greek *τρόπαρον*, *veterator*, 'crafty old fox.' See the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, 447.
- 154. *Swear by my sword.* The hilt and the blade being crossed at right angles by the guard, the sword sworn by was in that regard a cross. *Richard II*, I, iii, 178-192.
- 156. *Hic et ubique*—'here and everywhere.' A scholastic phrase in theology. In this scene, as in several others, Hamlet illustrates the motto of Giordano Bruno's *Il Candelajo*, 1583, *In tristitia hilaris, in hilaritate tristis* ('In sadness glad, in gladness sad'). Is it possible that in the halls of Beauchamp Court or in the glades of Wedgnock Park, while he was the guest of Sir Fulke Greville, Shakespeare had seen that man 'of slight and slender presence, wasted and pale, thoughtful and sad, with dark eyes of mingled melancholy and ardour, and noble, regular features,' who wrote *De l'Infinito Universo Mondi*, and idealised him as Hamlet?

### ACT II.—SCENE I.

This scene was for upwards of a century never acted, and is even yet often omitted in representation as by no means essential to the play.

- 7. *Danskers*—Danes. *Danske* was the old English name for Denmark. See in the *Tale of Argentile and Curan*, the line—

'By chance, one Curan, son unto a prince in Danske, did see'  
—Warner's *Albion's England*, 1586.

- 8. *Keep*—(1) live; (2) maintain; (3) possess; (4) lodge; (5) frequent; (6) fix their style of life, in the respective questions proposed.
- 10. *Encompassment*—exhaustive summary.
- 1b. *Drift*—here force; at line 37, intention, meaning; in III, i, 1, management.
- 22. *Slips*—(1) false steps, mistakes; (2) engraftments.
- 29. *Another.* For this Theobald, Monck Mason, etc., would read 'an utter.'

31. *Quaintly*—deftly, delicately.  
 34. *Unreclaimed*—untamed, untrained.  
 35. *Of general assault*—forming a common temptation.  
 38. *Fetich of warrant*—a cunning plan often justified by its success.  
 43. *Prenominate*—aforesaid, previously named.  
 47. *Addition*—style of salutation.  
 62. *Bait*—alluring morsel, carefully planned to deceive.  
 Ib. *Carp*. ‘The carp is a stately, a good, and a subtle fish,’ which is mentioned by Dame Juliana Berners in the *Boke of St Albans*, 1496, as a ‘dayntous fyssh, but scarce.’ It is an inhabitant of lakes and ponds rather than rivers. It is amazing fecund, and is said to live to a great age—150 or 200 years! It is not a free-biter, and even when hooked runs strongly and fights with cunning and resolution. It is very cautious, and nibbles at the bait before it takes it, even when most cleverly set forth. As Isaak Walton saith, ‘If you will fish for a carp, you must put on a very large measure of patience’ *Compleat Angler*—chap. viii, p. 168, Elliot Stock’s reprint.  
 64. *Windlaces*—wiles, cunning methods, circuitous processes. ‘*Windlace*, literally a-winding, was used to express taking a circuituous course, fetching a compass, making an indirect advance, or, more colloquially, beating about the bush, instead of going directly to a place or object, and in this sense it exactly harmonises with the other phrase used by Polonius to express the same thing—*assays of bias*—attempts in which, instead of going straight to the object, we seek to reach it by a curved or winding course, the bias gradually bringing the ball round to the jack’—*Edinburgh Review, Shakespearian Glossaries*, p. 93.  
 Ib. *Assays of bias*—indirect attempts, experimental trials of *bias* (French *biais*, sloping), inclinations, tendencies to run away. A term in bowling, see Nicholas Breton’s *Grimello’s Fortunes*, 1604: ‘Temptations, illusions, and suggestions . . . would have put you out of your *bias*, that you would sometime have lost the cast had you bowled never so well’—Dr A. B. Grosart’s *Chertsey Worthies Library*, reprint, p. 6, col. i.  
 79. *Down-gyved* (perhaps ‘ungyved, down’)—gyves (Welsh *gysyn*), shackles, fetters, fastenings; hanging down like fetters.

## SCENE II.

21. *Adheres*—is attached.  
 22. *Gentry*—*generositas*, the kindness of well-bred men.  
 90. *Wit*—wisdom, intellectual discourse.  
 98. *A foolish figure*—anadiplosis or redoubling.  
 105. *Perpend*—an affected term for reflect upon, consider. See *Merry Wives*, II, i, 119.  
 III. *Beautified*. The evil opinion Polonius expresses of this word requires some explanation. It was one of the most common complimentary terms of that age. Nash dedicates his *Christ’s*

*Tears over Jerusalem*, 1594, 'to the most beautified Lady Elizabeth Carey; Shakespeare uses it himself in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, IV, i; and the verb beautify he employs four times. Henry Chettle, in the preface to *Kind Harl's Dreame*, 1593, speaks of works 'no lesse beautified with eloquente phrase, than garnished with excellent example.' Something must be surmised as underlying this critical observation. Now, we know that Robert Greene charged Shakespeare with having 'beautified himself' with 'feathers' not his own, and this we read as stigmatising that phrase as a *vile* one in its falsity and its ill-nature. *Ante*, p. 27.

- 141. *Out of thy sphere*—beyond thy reach, moving in another sphere.
- 142. *Precepts*. Not *precepts*, which set forth the general law, but *prescripts*, which apply it to the particular instance.
- 163. *Arras*—tapestry. Arras, the old capital of Artois, was the seat of the chief manufacture of these room-hangings.
- 174. *Fishmonger*. He had been fishing for Hamlet's secret, and was about to sell it (when caught) for royal favour.
- 196. *The satirical slave*. The reference seems here to be to Juvenal:

‘Da spatiū vitæ, multos da, Jupiter, annos  
Hoc recto vultu, solum hoc et pallidus optas  
Sed quam continuis et quantis longa senectus  
Plena malis, deformem, et teturum ante omnia vultum  
Dissimilemque sui,’ etc.—*Satira X.*

‘Grant us, ye gods, a dateless term of years—  
In health, in sickness, these are still our prayers,  
And yet how numerous are the ills of age !  
The darkest blot on life’s unhappy page :  
A hideous face—a body lank and thin—  
Loose hanging jaws—a parched and shrivelled skin.  
Unlike ourselves we grow and change our shape  
To the foul portraits of a wrinkled ape.’

—FRANCIS HODGSON, M.D.

- 250, 251, 253, 255. *Shadow*. Here Shakespeare plays with a commonplace of Greek poetry popular in his day, found in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, 839, and in Pindar's *Pythian Odes*, viii, 136, and Englished by Sir John Davies, thus :

‘Man's life is but a dream, yea, less than so,  
The shadow of a dream.’

- 259. *I am most dreadfully attended*. Here the prince uses an equivoque, apparently underrating his servants, really giving sarcastic expression to his opinion of the two courtiers.
- 280. *An eye of you*—a glimpse of your meaning.
- 295. *Apprehension*. A logical term signifying the power of receiving or forming ideas; imaginative capacity. See *Richard II*, I, iii, 300.
- 296. *Paragon*—the peerless among, the most perfect of.
- 311. *Whose lungs are tickled o' the sere*. *Sere* or *serre*, now spelled

*sear or scean*, the catch in a gunlock which keeps the hammer on full or half cock, till the trigger is drawn. Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, in his *Defensative against the Poyson of Supposed Prophecies*, 1583, speaks of 'the moods and humours of the vulgar sort' being 'so loose and tickle of the seare.' This phrase, therefore, means 'whose lungs are easily moved to laughter, like a gun which goes off at the least touch.' This explanation was suggested independently by Dr Brinsley Nicholson and 'the Cambridge editors'; and is supported by Hamlet's opinion of those clowns who operate on such loose-set 'spectators' (III, ii, 38). Another explanation of the phrase has been given—those whom old jokes set agog easily enough. Quarto 1603 reads, 'that are tickled in the lungs.'

314. *The tragedians of the city.* The licensed players, those having 'the law of writ and the liberty.'

318. *Inhibition . . . innovation.* 'On 19th February 1597-8, an order was issued by the Privy Council to the effect that only two companies of public players—the Lord Admiral's and the Lord Chamberlain's—should be permitted to act in London or its neighbourhood' (Collier's *Annals of the Stage*, p. 305); and by another order, dated 22d June 1600, the council commanded that only two public theatres—the Fortune in Golding Lane, and the Globe on the Bankside, should be opened for stage performances—p. 312. 'The Blackfriars seems to have been occupied during the earlier years of the seventeenth century by the youths known as the "children of the Queen's Chapel," as they were called in the time of Queen Elizabeth, or as the "children of the Revels," which was the name given to them after the accession of James I to the throne'—p. 353. 'These juvenile actors were, in the language of that day, regarded as a private company, and did not, therefore, come under the interdict of the Privy Council, which was directed exclusively against common stage-plays and players. . . . A doubt has been raised whether "the eyry of children" relates to the "children of Paul's," that is to say, the singing boys of St Paul's Cathedral, or to the "children of Her Majesty's Chapel." There exists distinct evidence that the former of these juvenile societies, after having been for some years interdicted from engaging in theatrical performances, were again acting, and with considerable success, at the commencement of the seventeenth century. In a piece entitled *Jack Drum's Entertainment [or Pasquil and Katharine]*, first published in 1601, we find the following dialogue :

"Sir Edw. Fortune. I saw the children of Paul's last night,  
And troth they pleased me pretty, pretty well.  
The apes, in time, will do it handsomely."

*Planet.*

I'faith, I like the audience that frequenteth there  
 With much applause ; a man shall not be choaked  
 With the stench of garlick, nor be pasted  
 To the barmy jacket of a beer-brewer.

*Brabant, Jun.*

Tis a good gentle audience," etc.

Many of the commentators have taken it for granted that this passage was pointed at these choir-boys of St Paul's, but we are very strongly disposed to adopt a different opinion, and to believe that the poet meant the rebuke or remonstrance for the "children of the Queen's Chapel." The boys of St Paul's seem to have performed at this period in their own singing school. With the limited accommodation, which was all we must suppose that such a building afforded, they could hardly have become the successful rivals of the proprietors of a great public theatre, and in all probability their "good gentle audiences" were not the rushing multitudes which carried away *Hercules and his load too*. The young singers of the Queen's Chapel, on the other hand, were in possession of a regular theatrical establishment. We know that they performed Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* in the year 1600 and his *Poetaster* in the year 1601. Both these plays contain a number of caustic allusions to the dramatists and actors of the day, including the members of the Globe company; they involved their author in a bitter literary warfare, and Shakespeare seems to us very distinctly to refer to this contest, and to complain temperately but firmly of the "wrong" which was done to the youths themselves by making them the vehicles of an attack on the members of a profession to which they might themselves one day belong'—*The Life and Genius of Shakespeare*, by Thomas Kenney, p. 374. The passage, which stands thus in quarto 1603,

"I'faith, my lord, noveltie carries it away,  
 For the principal public audience that  
 Come to them are turned to private players  
 And to the humours of children,"

does not appear in 1604, but occurs as in the text in folio 1623.

319. *The late innovation.* J. Monck Mason would interpret this as meaning 'the recent change in the government,' and supports his view by reference to the following line from *The Coronation*—a play published in the folio edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's works, as a drama by the latter, though really the composition of James Shirley—in which, after Leonatus is proclaimed king, Lysander says to Philocles :

"What dost thou think of this innovation?"  
*Comments on Shakespeare's Plays*, v. 381.

325. *Aery of children, little eyases, that cry out, etc.* These are technical terms in falconry. 'Names are bestowed on a fal-

con according to her age or taking. The first is an *eyess*, which name lasts as long as she is in the *eyrie*. These are very troublesome in their feeding, and do cry very much, and are difficultly entred'—*The Gentleman's Recreations*.

- Ib.* *Eyrie* (from *ei*, an egg)—an eggery or collection of eggs.
- Ib.* *Eyases* (from *nidiace*, a nestling; originally a *nialis*, regarded as an *eyas*)—nestlings.
- 331. *Escoted*—paid by share; *escoter*.
- 343. *Hercules and his load too*. A good-humoured phrase of praise; for the sign of 'the Globe on the Bankside, Southwark' (Shakespeare's theatre), was 'Hercules carrying the world on his shoulder.'
- 366. *An old man is twice a child*. A Latin proverb, 'Bis pueri senes.'
- 377. *Tragedy . . . poem unlimited*. Bishop Percy notices that this enumeration, 'tragedy, comedy, history,' is that adopted by Shakespeare's editors in the early folios; that Beaumont and Fletcher in their prologue to *The Captain*, 1613, say:

'This is nor comedy, nor tragedy,  
Nor history;'

that Stow, writing in 1598, what was published in 1603, tells how 'stage-playes hath been used, comedies, tragedies, enterludes, and histories, true and fayned.' Besides this, he calls attention to the facts, that in 1574 the Earl of Leicester's players were authorised to 'use, exercise, and occupie the arte and faculty of playing comedies, tragedies, enterludes, stage-playes,' etc.; but that 'when Shakespeare's *Histories* had become the ornaments of the stage, they were considered by the public, and by himself, as a formal and necessary species.' Hence, in the licence of 1603, Fletcher, Shakespeare, etc., are authorised to play 'comedies, tragedies, histories, enterludes, morals, pastorals, stage-plaies, and such like.' This early claim for his histories or historical plays to a distinct place as a legitimate species, sufficiently different from tragedies and comedies to be reckoned apart, is an important fact in Shakespeare's biography.

- 380. *Scene indivisible, or poem unlimited*. A drama in which the unity of place is observed, and one in which 'the unities' are disregarded.
- Ib.* *Seneca*. 'The tragedies of Seneca, having separately appeared in an English dress during the previous fifteen years, were collected and published together as early as 1581. . . . Shakespeare himself, at the outset of his career, had been indirectly charged by Nash with pillaging the English Seneca for sensational effects; and though there is little evidence of this [on his part], the practice was probably common enough, as Nash goes on to add—"The sea exhaled by drops will in

continuance be dry; and Seneca let blood line by line and page by page, at length must needs die to our stage.' Shakespeare showed a far truer appreciation of the tragedies in stigmatising them as "heavy"—the heaviest of all works avowedly dramatic'—Thomas S. Baynes in the *Athenaeum* of 5th May 1877, p. 577. We ought perhaps to note here that Queen Elizabeth herself was a translatress of the 'heavy' Seneca. Plautus, unless in the *Menachmi*, by W. W., 1595, was not available to a merely English and unacademic reader. Perhaps his just claim to the epithet of 'light,' in the sense of evoking heart-easing mirth, is strongly enough stated in his own epitaph :

'Postquam morte datu'st Plautus Comedia luget,  
Scena est deserta, dein Ritus Ludu' Jocusque  
Et numeri innumeri simul omnes collacrumarunt.'

'Since Plautus died Thalia beats her breast,  
The stage is empty, Laughter, Sport, and Jest,  
Eke for his tuneless tones, together, weep distract.'

Compare this with Spenser's *Tears of the Muses*, 197-204.

381. *For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.* This has been interpreted by the Rev. C. E. Moberly to mean, 'For adhering to their text, or for extemporisng when need requires;' but perhaps there is a quip intended, within the city, where 'the law of writ' prevails, and 'the liberty,' or the outlying districts to which the municipal franchises and privileges have been extended. In a very old map of Southwark, preserved in the Record Office, a boundary in three or four places is thus indicated : 'Hyer endeth the lyberte of the Mayre, and begynneth the Kyng.'
383. *Jephthah.* There is an old ballad on this topic by William Petowe. In the Stationers' Registers, 1567, there is an entry to Alexander Lacy, of 'A balleff intituled the Songe of Jesphas daughter at his death.' There was a *Tragedy of Jephthah* taken from *Judges xi*, written both in Latin and Greek, by a learned divine, John Christopherson, 1546; George Buchanan produced a tragedy on the same subject in 1554; and in 1587 an Italian tragedy was composed by Benedict Capuano, a monk of Casino. In Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, 1844, vol. i, a copy of this ballad is given as 'it was retrieved from utter oblivion by a lady who wrote it down from memory as she had heard it sung by her father. I am indebted for it,' says Percy, 'to the friendship of Mr Steevens. It has been said that the original ballad, in black letter, is among Antony & Wood's collections in the Ashmolean Museum. But upon application, lately made, the volume which contained this song was missing, so that I can only now give it as in the former edition.' Read *Judges xi*, 30-39, and *xii*, 1-406. *Chopine.* S. W. Singer's explanation of this phrase is —

- haps the best. It alludes 'to the boy having grown so as to fill the place of a tragedy heroine, and so assumed the *cothurnus*,' which Puttenham described as 'those high-corked shoes or pantofles, which now they call in Spaine and Italey *shopini*,' i.e., *cipolini*—*Arte of Poesie*, p. 49.
407. *Cracked*—broken, altered by age, as boy's voices do. 'Coins when cracked beyond the ring which encircled the royal effigies were declared uncurrent.'
408. *French falconers*—with zest, like keen sportsmen.
415. *Caviare to the general*—too dainty for the untaught commonalty. Nehemiah Grew, M.D., F.R.S., informs us in his *Museum Regalis Societatis*, 1681, that 'the eggs [roe] of a sturgeon, being salted and made up into a mass, were first brought from Constantinople by the Italians, and called *caviare*.' It is reckoned a peculiar delicacy. Giles Fletcher, in *The Russe Commonwealth*, 1591, p. 11, notes and describes it.
420. *Sallets*. As salad is made of fragrant and piquant herbs, sallets is used to signify sharp conceited words, to excite mirth.
424. *Æneas' tale to Dido*. It is not improbable that 'Ritson has hit the mark [when he says], It appears to me not only that Shakespeare had the favourable opinion of these lines which he makes Hamlet express, but that they were extracted from some play which he at a more early period had either produced or projected upon the story of Dido and Æneas. The verses recited are far superior to those of any coeval writer. The parallel passage in Marlow and Nash's *Dido* will not bear the comparison. Possibly, indeed, it might have been his first attempt, before the divinity that lodged within him had instructed him to despise the timid and unnatural style so much and so unjustly admired in his predecessors and contemporaries. The introduction of these lines, we think, cannot be accounted for on any other supposition but that they were written by Shakespeare himself; and he is so thoroughly in earnest in his criticism upon the play, and his complaint of its want of success is so apparently sincere, that it is impossible that the passage had reference to something nonexistent'—Charles Knight's *Pictorial Shakespeare*, 'Tragedies,' vol. i, p. 96.
- 1b. *Dido*. 'Cardinal Wolsey once condescended to be a spectator of a Latin *Tragedy of Dido* from Virgil, acted by the scholars of Saint Paul's School, written by John Rightwise, the master, an eminent grammarian'—WARTON. In Shakespeare's birth-year, 1564, Queen Elizabeth honoured the University of Cambridge with a visit, and was present at a representation of a *Tragedy of Dido*, by Edward Halliwell (Warton), performed by a select company of scholars. *A Ballet of a Lover blamynge his Fortune by Dido and Æneas for theyr untruthe*, was entered at the Stationers' Hall in

the same year. In 1583, Albertus de Alasco, a Polish prince-palatine (see *Merchant of Venice*, I, ii, 43), arrived in Oxford, and there saw the *Tragedy of Dido*, by Dr Wm. Gager, acted by the scholars of Christ's Church Hall and St John's College, in a very gorgeous and expensive manner. Marlow's tragedy of *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, left incomplete, was finished by his friend, Thomas Nash, and published 1594. There were extant, 'in choice Italian,' the *Didone*, both of Luigi Dolce, 1547, and of Giraldi Cinthio, 1583. On 3d January 1597, the play of *Dido and Æneas* was performed by Henslowe's company. Percy, in his *Reliques*, prints an old ballad on 'Queen Dido; or Æneas, the Wandering Prince of Troy.' Shakespeare makes upwards of a dozen allusions to the Virgilian romance.

430. *The rugged Pyrrhus*, etc. 'Shakespeare has made these lines elaborately turned for the purpose of marking a distinction between the diction of this supposed tragedy, and that of the personages of the drama—whose language he would have taken to be that of real life—and by this artifice to give the greater appearance of reality to his play'—John Howe, Lord Chedworth's *Notes on Shakespeare's Plays*, p. 251.
482. *Mobled*. Upton, who once thought this word should be mabbled, carelessly dressed, afterwards suggested that 'this designedly affected expression seemed to be formed from Virgil's *Aeneid*, ii, 40: *Magna comitate caterva* (engirt by a mighty throng); as if *mob-led*'. Warburton explains it as *veiled*; Holt White holds that it is a depravation of *muffled up*.
484. *Bisson*—blinding; Dutch, *bij sien*, near-sighted; between, bleared, a Lincolnshire provincialism.
533. *Hecuba*. On 1st August 1586, E. White entered in the Stationers' Registers, the *Lamentation of Hecuba and the Ladies of Troy*; in [Thomas] Fennes Frates, 1590, after a prose narrative of 'the ruinous fable of stately Troy,' there is given a poem on the same topic, entitled *Hecuba's Mis-haps* (pp. 91–115); and on 22d February 1593, W. Matthews entered the *Lamentation of Troy for the Death of Hector*.
544. *John-a-dreams*. Like Jack-a-lantern—John o' the Dreamt, a dreamy impracticable fellow.
549. *Plucks off my beard*. *Isa.* i, 6.
566. *Guilty creatures sitting at a play*. 'Tis plain Shakespeare alludes to a story told of Alexander, the cruel tyrant of Thessaly, who, seeing a famous tragedian act the *Troades* of Euripides, was so sensibly touched, that he left the theatre before the play was ended; being ashamed, as he owned, that he, who never pitied those he murdered, should wince at the sufferings of Hecuba and Andromache. See Plutarch, in the *Life of Pelopidas*—Upton's *Observations on Shakespeare*, p. 62. In *A Warning for Fair Women* (written before 1594) the following example is given:

'A woman that had made away her husband,  
And sitting to behold a tragedy  
At Lynn, a town in Norfolk,  
Acted by players travelling that way,  
Wherein woman that had murdered hers,  
Was ever haunted with her husband's ghost,  
The passion, written by a feeling pen,  
And acted by a good tragedian,  
She was so moved with the sight thereof  
As she cried out the play was made of her,  
And openly confessed her husband's murder.'

Heywood, in his *Apology of Actors*, 1612, relates the same incident, and adds that it occurred while the players of the Earl of Sussex were performing *The History of Friar Francis*. A similar story is told at length by the Prince of Denmark in the German *Hamlet* of 1589, as having happened at Strasburg in Germany.

- 574. *Tent*—either *probe* deeply or watch narrowly, as in the Scotch phrase, *tak' tent*, take exceeding care.
  - 576. *The devil . . . shape*. Compare *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, iii, 254; *Comedy of Errors*, I<sup>v</sup>, iii, 55; *Othello*, II, iii, 348; *Macbeth*, I, iii, 123; and *2 Cor.* xi, 14.
  - 581. *Relative*—to the purpose; clearly convincing.
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### ACT III.—SCENE I.

- 13. *Niggard . . . reply*. Warburton, to bring these words nearer the truth of fact, conjectured that *most free* and *niggard* should change places. But Shakespeare probably intended to make these diplomats *lie* to their employers and of their friend the prince, through courtly policy.
- 31. *Affront*—i.e., meet face to face, from Italian *afrontare*.
- 57. *To be*, etc. This soliloquy in quarto 1603 is placed near the beginning of Act II.
- 60. *To take arms against a sea of troubles*. Plautus uses *mare malorum*, ‘a sea of troubles.’ This phrase seems to us to be easily explained, if we remember the passage:

‘Dar'st thou, Cassius, now  
Leap in with me into this angry flood,  
And swim to yonder point?  
We did *buffet it*  
*With lusty sinews*, throwing it aside  
And stemming it with hearts of controversy’  
—*Julius Caesar*, I, ii, 101-109.

Abraham Fleming, in 1576, translated the *Registre of Histories* by Claudius Ælianus of Præneste. In that work we are told of the Celts that ‘many also oppose the overwhelming sea; there are some likewise, who, taking arms,

- rush upon the waves and sustain their attack, extending their naked swords and spears in like manner as if they were able to terrify or wound them'—quoted by Dr C. M. Ingleby on the suggestion of Dr Sebastian Evans from Ritson's *Memoirs of the Celts*, p. 118, in *The Still Lion*, p. 89.
61. *To die, to sleep.* It may be worth while to note, as Theobald has done, that Beaumont and Fletcher in the *Scornful Lady*, published 1616, refer to these words in this play, 'Have patience till our fellow Nicholas is deceased, that is, asleep; for so the word is taken. To sleep, to die; to die, to sleep, a very figure, sir'—II, i, 43-46.
76. *Quietus*—discharge, settlement; a technical law phrase.
77. *Who would fardels bear.* In the *Commendatory Verses* pre-fixed by Thomas Churchyard to Jerome Cardanus' *Conforte*, translated by Thomas Bedingfield, 1573, it is said:
- ‘This book bewrays what wretched wracke belongs to life of man,  
What burdens bears he on his back since first this world began.’
80. *Undiscover'd country.* Ælian (iii, 18), says that in the country of the Meropes ‘there was a place called *Anostum*, which word signifieth a place whence there is no returne.’ See C. M. Ingleby's *Still Lion*, p. 91.
10. *From whose bourn . . . returns.* See *Job*, x, 21. *Bourn*—from French *borne*, a boundary, a limit—does not mean the head of a fountain, or a small streamlet, as in modern usage it does. ‘Was not,’ it has been asked, ‘the ghost a returned traveller? One replies to this question no, he was merely a spiritual visitant; but another supposes that Hamlet is reasoning out the matter as a theoretical theme, and in such a case will not accept his own extraordinary experience as an element in the discourse of reason.’
106. *That if you be . . . beauty.* ‘Hamlet’s mother’s beauty had been her snare . . . His mother’s honesty had fallen a victim to her beauty. Let beauty and honesty therefore . . . have no discourse’—HENRY IRVING.
117. *Relish of it.* For *it* we should perhaps read *vice*, or understand that opposite to virtue is meant by it.
122. *It were better my mother had not borne me.* ‘It had been good for that man if he had not been born’—Matt. xxvi, 24.
142. *God has given . . . another.* In the English version of Mateo Aleman’s *Guzman de Alfarache* (first published in 1599), issued in the same year as the first folio of Shakespeare’s plays, we have this phrase, ‘O affront above all other affronts! that God hath given thee one face, thou shouldest abuse His image and make thyselfe another’—ISAAC REED.
146. *Married already, all but one (i.e. the king) shall live.*
155. *Music vows.* The use of substantives as adjectives is common with Shakespeare. See ‘neighbour room,’ III, iv, 213; ‘neighbour air,’ *Romeo and Juliet*, II, vi, 27.

165. *The hatch and the disclose*—verbs for nouns; the maturing and the result of his brooding thoughts.

## SCENE II.

12. *Termagant*. Perhaps, as suggested by Dr R. G. Latham, a corruption of *tresmegistus*, thrice-greatest; but more probably a vulgarity for *tervagante* or *trivagante* (as cormorant for corvorian), Diana *Trivia*, the moon, Hecate, the wanderer under three names, the sister of Apollo. As a Scythian goddess, the Crusaders, it may be, imagined a priest of this divinity to be the deity in whose service he was. They represented Termagant as a loudly blustering, violent god, whom the Mohammedans worship. In the early moralities and miracle plays he was represented as the co-mate of Mohammed in much the same connection as they appear in Hall's first satire:

‘Not ladies, wanton love, nor wandering knight,  
Legend I out in rhimes all richly dight;  
Nor fright the reader with the pagan vaunt  
Of mightie Mahmoud and great *Termagaunte*.’

In *King and no King*, 1611, by Beaumont and Fletcher, we have, ‘This would make a saint swear like a soldier, and a soldier like Termagaunt’—IV, ii, 160.

13. *Herod*. This sovereign in the mystery plays, of course, was always represented as a blustering tyrant; as may be seen on referring to the *Chester Whitsun Plays*, by Thomas Wright, and the *Coventry Mysteries*, by J. O. Halliwell, in the [Old] Shakespeare Society publications.  
 21. Donatus quotes, in his *Life of Terence*, from Cicero, ‘Comedia est imitatio vite, speculum consuetudinis imago veritatis.’  
 25. *One . . . . a whole theatre*. Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*, 1601, supplies this reference:

‘If I prove the pleasure but of one,  
So he judicious be, he shall be alone  
A theatre unto me’—*Epilogue*, 15 from end.

40. *Ambition in the fool*. Shakespeare evidently regarded this tendency of comic actors to *gag*, as ‘very tolerable and not to be endured.’ In the 1603 quarto, he extends this denunciation further, thus:

‘And then you have some agen that keep one sute  
Of jeasts, as a man is known by one sute of  
Apparel; and gentlemen quote his jeasts down  
In their tables before they come to the play; as thus—  
“Cannot you stay till I eat my porridge?” and “You owe me  
A quarter's wages!” and “My coat wants a cullision!”  
And “Your beest is sowre!” and babbling with his lips,  
And thus keeping in his sink-space of jeasts,  
When, God knows, the wanne clown cannot make a jest  
Unless by chance, as the blinde man catcheth a hare.’

60. *Seal'd*—appropriated and secured. *See Rom. xv, 28.*  
 64. *Blood and judgment*—passion and discretion. *See As You Like It, V, iv, 54, and Hamlet, III, iv, 70, 71.*  
 68. *Heart's core.* Anthony Scoloker in *Diaphantus; or the Passions of Love*, 1604—in which he notices ‘friendly Shakespeare's tragedies’ and ‘Prince Hamlet’—borrows the idea of his line:

‘Oh, I could wear her in my heart's heart's core.

75. *Occulted guilt.* This is the correct law phrase. Murder was defined by the old legal writers as *occulta hominis occisio*, etc., ‘the secret slaying of a person’—Coke's *Institutes*, iii, cap. 7.  
 114. *Black . . . sables.* ‘Sable,’ from the French, signifies deep, dull, black, and so is applicable to mourning garments; but sable is the fur of the *Zibellina*. ‘Sable,’ says Peacham, ‘is worn of great personages, and brought out of Russia, being the fur of a little beast of that name, esteemed for the excellency of the colours of the hairs, which are very black. Hence *sables*, in heraldry, signifies the black colour in gentlemen's arms’—Quoted in Dr R. G. Latham's *Johnson's Dictionary*.  
 119. *Hobby-horse.* ‘The morris and the May games of Robin Hood attained their most perfect form when united with the *Hobby-horse* and the *Dragon*. Of these, the former was the resemblance of the head and tail of a horse manufactured in paste-board [or basket-work], and attached to a person whose business it was, whilst he seemed to ride gracefully on its back, to imitate the prancings and curvettings of that noble animal, whose supposed feet were concealed by a foot-cloth reaching to the ground; and the latter, constructed of the same materials, was made to hiss and shake his wings, and was frequently attacked by the man on the hobby-horse, who thus personated the character of St George. . . . In consequence of the opposition, however, of the Puritans, during the close of Elizabeth's reign, who considered the rites of May-day as relics of paganism, much havoc was made among the *dramatis personae* of this festivity. Sometimes, instead of Robin and Marian, only a lord or lady of the day was adopted, frequently the Friar [Tuck] was not suffered to appear, and still more frequently the hobby-horse was interdicted. This zealous interference of the sectarians was ridiculed by the poets of the day, and among the rest by Shakespeare, who [here] quotes a line from a satirical ballad on this subject, and represents Hamlet as terming it an epitaph. . . . He has the same allusion in *Lov's Labour's Lost* [III, i, 29, 30]; and Ben Jonson has still more explicitly noticed the neglect into which this character in the May-games had fallen in his days:

" But see, the hobby-horse is forgot;  
 Foole, it must be your lot  
 To supply his want with faces,  
 And some other buffoon graces"

—*Entertainment of the Queen and Prince at Althorpe, 1603.*

—N. Drake's *Shakespeare and his Times*, vol. i, pp. 166-172. In a quarto, *A True Relation of the Faction begun at Wisbich, by Fa. Edmonds, alias Weston, a Jesuite*, 1595, we find that others besides the Puritans opposed the hobby-horse, for therein we read, 'He lifted up his countenance as if a new spirit had been put into him, and tooke upon him to controll, and finde fault with this and that (as the coming into the hall of a hobby-horse in Christmas), affirming that he would no longer tolerate these and those so grosse abuses, but would have them reformed'—p. 7. In Greene's *Tu Quoque* (which must have been performed in Queen Elizabeth's time), we have this line spoken by Will Rash:

'Tother hobby-horse, I perceive, is not forgotten.'

While in Drue's *Countess of Suffolk*, 1631, we read:

'Clunie. Answer me, hobbi-horse,  
 Which way crossed he you saw now?  
 Jenkins. Who do you speak to, sir?  
 We have forgot the hobby-horse'—Sig. C, 4.

One of the songs in Weelke's *Madrigals*, 1608, contains something like the phrase:

'Since Robin Hood, Maid Marian, and Little John are gone-a home-a,  
 The hobby-horse was quite forgot when Kempe did dance a,  
 He did labour, after the tabor, for to dance them into France.  
 For he took pains  
 To skip it, to skip it;  
 In hope of gains, of gains,  
 He will trip it, trip it, trip it on the toe.  
 Diddle, diddle, diddle, do'—No. xx.

- 133. *Miching mallecho* 'has caused many notes.' . . . 'What Shakespeare meant was doubtless *mucho malhecho*, much mischief.'—G. H. LEWES.
- 178. *Validity*—worth, value. *King Lear*, I, i, 72; *All's Well that Ends Well*, V, iii, 193.
- 193. *The great man down, you mark his favourite flies.* Compare 'A poor man being down is thrust away also by his friends'—*Eccl. xiii, 21.*
- 226. *The Mouse-trap . . . tropically.* 'Hamlet calls the play *The Mouse-trap*, with reference to the design with which it was performed. *Tropically* is *trapically* in the earliest quarto, an idle, unmeaning word, except that we may see a faint shade of meaning in the play being a *figurative representation* of an actual deed, and this, combined with the opportunity of playing on the word *trap*, is the true reason why we

meet with this word thus oddly introduced'—Joseph Hunter's *New Illustrations of Shakespeare*, vol. ii, p. 252.

227. *Gonsago*. 'The story of the play is certainly taken from the murder of the Duke of Urbano by Luigi *Gonzago*, in 1538, who was poisoned by means of a lotion poured into his ears. This new way of poisoning caused great horror throughout Europe, and we often meet with allusions to it. It is worth noting also that the wife of the duke was a Gonzago. Some of the commentators have absurdly objected to *Battista* as a female Christian name. It was not only a common female name at this period, but especially connected with Mantua and the Gonzagos'—C. Elliot Browne, *Athenæum*, 29th July 1876.
230. *Let the galled jade wince*. F. J. Furnivall has pointed out that in Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* these lines occur:

'A galled horse, the soothe if ye list see  
Who toucheth him, boweth his back for dred'—fol. xxxvii, b.

In *Damon and Pythias*, 1582, we have:

'I know the galled horse will soonest wince.'

239. *The croaking raven doth*, etc. The late Mr Richard Simpson thought this was a Shakespearian allusion to the line:

'The screeking raven sits croaking for revenge,'

which occurs in the *True Tragedie of Richard III*, Hazlitt's *Dodsley's Old Plays*, vol. v, p. 117. Mr W. T. Malleson notes 'that the raven is the Danish typical bird, and therefore no unfit emblem of "the majesty of buried Denmark"'—*New Shakespeare Society's Transactions*, 1874, p. 473.

243. *Hecate's*—a dissyllable. Compare *Macbeth*, II, i, 52, III, ii, 41, V, i, and notes.
260. *A forest of feathers*—refers to those large plumes which the old actors always wore when personating heroic or dignified characters.
261. *Turn Turk with me*—become totally reversed. Robert Daborne wrote a play *The Christian turned Turk*, printed 1612.
- 1b. *Provençal roses*. Either 'Provençal,' the rose de Provence, the double damask rose; or 'provincial,' the rose de provins, the ordinary double red rose; or perhaps artificial imitations of them. Compare:

'When roses in the gardens grew,  
And not in ribbons on a shoe;  
Now ribbon roses take such place,  
That garden roses want their grace,  
—*Friar Bacon's Prophesie*, 1604.

262. *A cry of players*—company of actors.
264. *Half a share*. 'The actors in Shakespeare's time had not

annual salaries. The whole receipts of each theatre were divided into shares, of which the proprietors of the theatre, or *housekeepers*, as they were called, had some; and each actor had one or more shares, or part of a share, according to his merit'—EDMUND MALONE.

265. *Damon dear.* The allusion is to the oft-celebrated friendship of Damon and Pythias, which had been celebrated in *Tow Lamentable Songs*, printed 1565, and in *A Boke entituled the Tragical Comedye of Damonde and Pithyas*, 1566, by Richard Edwardes, author of the song *When griping grief, etc.*, quoted in *Romeo and Juliet*, IV, v.
267. *Jove.* 'He does not say of Jove's bird, but heightening the compliment to his father of Jove himself'—UPTON.
268. *Pajock*—‘mere show but no worth and substance’—UPTON. Pope supposed that the substitution of this word for the rhyming *ass* is suggestive of the ‘fable of the birds who preferred that vain, gaudy, foolish bird, the peacock, to the eagle, in the choice of their king.’
277. *Perdy*—corrupted from *par Dieu*.
310. *Closest*—private room. *Matt.* vi, 6.
324. *Recorders.* Sir Joshua Hawkins thinks that the recorder was the same instrument as we now call a flageolet (*History of Music*, iv, 479); but others are of opinion that it was a kind of flute, of soft tone, with nine holes, called by Marsennus, in his *Harmonie Universelle*, i, 237, ‘fluste de Angleterre.’
372. *Nero*, the Roman Emperor, A.D. 54-68, by whose orders his mother Agrippina was slain.
376. *Shent*—ill-treated, brought to grief or shame.

### SCENE III.

32. *Nature makes them partial.* So Terence said long ago :

‘Matres omnes filii  
In peccato adjutrices, auxilio in paterna injuria,  
Solent esse’—*Heautontimorumenos*, V, ii, 38-40.

‘All mothers are wont  
To be advocates for their children when in fault,  
As aids against paternal severity.

37. *The primal eldest curse.* *Gen.* iv, 3-13.
46. *White as snow.* *Psalm* li, 7; *Isa.* i, 18.
62. *Ourselves compell'd . . . to give in evidence.* *Rom.* ii, 14-16; *2 Cor.* v, 10.
- 76-86. *A villain . . . No.* ‘Mr Harris, in his *Philological Enquiries*, gives an instance (from *William of Malmesbury*, p. 96, edit. London, fol., 1596), of a similar sentiment in William, Count of Poictou, who being about to despatch the Bishop of Poictou, who had offended him, suddenly stopped, saying, *Nec cælum unquam intrabis meæ manus ministerio* (Never shalt thou enter heaven by the aid of my hand)—

- John Lord Chedworth's *Notes on Shakespeare's Plays*, p. 354.  
 80. *Full of bread*. *Ezek.* xvi, 49.  
 87. *Hent*—grasp, grip, seizure. Warburton suggested *hest*; Theobald *hint*; the fourth folio gave *bent*.

## SCENE IV.

14. *By the rood*—by the cross, as in Holyrood, holy-cross. See 'by the holy rood'—*Richard III*, III, ii. The term *rood* is specially applied in architecture to the large cross erected in Roman Catholic churches over the entrance of the chancel or choir. So we have rood-tower, rood-steeple, rood-loft. Rood Lane in London was so called because a crucifix once stood there. Hearne says, 'though the *cross* and the *rood* are commonly taken for the same, yet the rood properly signified the image of Christ on the cross, so as to represent both the cross and the figure of our blessed Saviour as He suffered on it'—*Peter Langtoft's Chronicle*, Glossary, p. 544.  
 38. *Bras'd*—hardened it like brass, made it shameless. *King Lear*, I, i, 9.  
 49. *Rhapsody*—from the Greek *rhapsodia*, the title of each of the books of the Homeric poems, and perhaps meaning here parts without mutual dependence or coherency. Florio, in his translation of Montaigne, 1603, has 'mingle-mangles of many kinds of stiffe, or, as the Greeks call them, rhapsodies' —p. 68.  
 59. *A station . . . heaven-kissing hill*. See Phaeer's *Virgil's Æneid*:
- 'And now approaching neere, the top he seeth and mighty lim[bs]  
 Of Atlas, mountain tough, that heaven on boystrous shoulders beares . . . .  
 Their first on ground with wings of might deth Mercury arrive.'  
 —Book iv, 446-450 (1558).
62. *Set his seal*. *John*, iii, 33.  
 65. *A mildew'd ear blasting*, etc. An allusion to Pharaoh's dream, *Gen.* xli, 22-24, 27.  
 68. *Batten*—indulge yourself. *Batten*, to feed, become fat, thrive.  
 72. *Sense, sure, you have, . . . motion*. According to Aristotle's *Physics*, 'All motion has its origin in the soul, and therefore motion is a sign of intelligence or sense.'  
 72-77, 79-82. *Sense . . . difference*. *Eyes . . . mope*. Omitted in folio 1623.  
 78. *Hoodman blind*—blind-man's-buff.  
 91. *Grained*—engraved, fast-coloured, fixed.  
 99. *A vice of kings*—a mere mock king, a ridiculous representation of royalty:

'Like to the old vice;  
 Who with dagger of lath, in his rage and his wrath,  
 Cries, Ah ! ha !' etc.—*Twelfth Night*, IV.

The *vice* was a droll character in our old plays, clad in a long

- coat, wearing a cap with a pair of ass's ears, and armed with a dagger of lath.
100. *Cutpurse*—thief. Purses being worn outside hanging to the girdle, were often cut away and stolen.
115. *Conceit*—fancy, imagination. See *King Lear*, IV, vi, 42; *As You Like It*, II, vi, 7.
142. *It is not madness that I have utter'd.* *Acts*, xxvi, 25.
154. *Pursy*. ‘*Poulisif*—purse; shortwinded, breathing with difficulty’—COTGRAVE.
- 162-166, 168-171. *That monster . . . put on. . . . The next . . . potency.* Omitted in folio 1623.
170. *Curb*. So we read with Malone, Steevens, Boswell, Chalmers, Singer, White, Keightley, Hudson, etc. Quartos 1604, 1605, read *And either, the*; quarto 1611, and *maister the*; quartos 1619 and 1676, and *master the*, which Rowe, Knight, Collier, Elze, etc., accept. Tschischwitz reads *overcome*; Mr Bullock of Aberdeen, *wither up*. E. Forsyth proposed *house*; Dr B. Nicholson, *throne*; C. E. Moberly, *quell*; Ingleby, *lay or shame*, leaning favourably to the latter; the Clarendon Press editors, *couch or lodge*. *Overmaster, mate, hoist, overmatch, mask, entertain*, and many other readings, all conjectural, have been suggested.
179. *I must be cruel only to be kind.* Gibbon, founding on Aurelius Victor, states that the Emperor Severus having put forty-one senators, their wives, children, and clients to death, justified his conduct by saying, ‘To be mild, it was necessary that he should first be cruel’—*History of the Decline and Fall of Rome*, chap. v.
195. *The famous ape.* ‘Shakespeare seems to allude to some well-known story or fable of an ape, who being near a basket, in some tower or high place, was curious to see what was in it; he contrived to open it; and on seeing the birds which were in it fly away, to make experiment, whether he could not do the like, he crept into the basket, and, by his weight, tumbled it down and broke his neck’—Thomas Davies’ *Dramatic Miscellanies*, iii, p. 114.
- 203-211. Omitted in folio 1623.
207. *The engineer hoist with his own petard.* The eighth emblem in Theodore Beza’s *Icones*, 1580, shows a cannon bursting, and with one of its fragments killing the cannonier; and the Middle Age proverb ran, ‘Quibus rebus confidimus, iis maxime evertimur’ (To whatever things we trust, by these are we for the most part overthrown).

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ACT IV.—SCENE I.

25. *Ore among a mineral.* Shakespeare, with a licence not unusual among his contemporaries, uses *ore* for gold and *mineral* for mine—S. W. SINGER.

40-44. *So haply . . . air.* Omitted in folio 1623.

41. *Diameter.* In a direct line through the earth, without going round the semi-circumference.

42. *Blank*—the white mark in the centre of a target. *King Lear*, I, i, 150. *See:*

"Twas I won the wager, thought you hit the white."  
*Taming of a Shrew*, V, ii, 186.

### SCENE II.

6. *Compounded it with dust.* Compare 2 *Henry IV*:

'Only compound me with forgotten dust'—IV, v, 116.

'When I perhaps compounded am with clay'—*Measure for Measure*, iii, 10.

14-20. *A sponge . . . dry again.* In Suetonius' *Twelve Caesars*, 'Vespasian,' xvi, it is said: 'He advanced all the more rapacious among the procurators to higher offices, on purpose to squeeze them after they had grown richer; where, indeed, he was most commonly said to use as sponges, because he did, as one may say, wet them when dry and squeeze them when wet.'

17. *Like an ape.* Here quarto 1603 has the better phrase—'as an ape doth nuttes.'

27. *The king is a thing—of nothing.* Hamlet, on being prudently interrupted by Guildenstern, completes his sentence by the tag of an old proverb, founded on Scripture, Amos, vi, 13; Jer. xiv, 14; Isa. xxix, 20, xii, 12; Psalm cxlv, 4 (Prayer-Book version):

"Man is like a thing of naught."

29. *Hide fox*, etc. The cry formerly used by schoolboys in playing at 'hide-and-seek.'

### SCENE III.

9. *Diseases desperate, etc.* 'A desperate disease is to be committed to a desperate doctor'—Lyly's *Euphues*, 1579, p. 67, Arber's Reprint.

22. *Convocation of politic worms.* Convocation, an assembly; politic, polite, social, discriminating. Worm: it, Berger thinks, a quip on the Diet of the German Empire held at Worms under the Emperor Charles V, April 1521, at which the doctrines of Luther were condemned.

48. *I see a cherub that sees them.* A cherub is an angel of love.

58-61. *England . . . Danish sword.* We have here an indication of the time of the play. Though somewhat indefinitely, it throws back the date to a period prior to the Norman Con-

quest, when England was either under the sovereignty of the Northmen, as in the time of Canute, 1016-1035, or paid tribute to the Danish power, and therefore subsequent to the year of their first landing in 787.

## SCENE IV.

6. *Eye*—presence, in reference to superiors.
- 8-65. Omitted in folio 1623.
26. *Imposthume*. Explained as ‘an inward swelling full of corrupt matter,’ from Greek *apostema*, an abscess.
36. *Looking before and after*. The phrase occurs frequently in Homer’s *Iliad*, i, 343, iii, 109, xviii, 250; *Odyssey*, xxiv, 451.
38. *Fust*—from French *fusté*, stale, mouldy, to become useless.
61. *Fight for a plot*, etc. Something like this we read in that admirable dialogue of Lucian between Mercury and Charon, called *Speculantes*. ‘See (says Mercury to Charon) those Argives and Lacedemonians fighting together, and their half-dead general inscribing a trophy with his blood. What do they fight for?’ replies Charon. ‘Why, for the little spot on which they stand’—Thomas Davies’ *Dramatic Miscellanies*, vol. iii, p. 127.

## SCENE V.

40. *They say the owl*, etc. In Miss C. M. Yonge’s *History of Christian Names*, Gertrude, the Queen’s name, is rendered ‘the spear maiden,’ and while illustrating this etymology, the authoress furnishes us with the following Norwegian legend, to which in all likelihood Ophelia, led by the cross associations of madness, refers. In Norway the woodpecker is called the *jartrudfugle*, or Gertrude-bird. A maiden of this name, Gertrude, ‘was baking when our Lord passed by, and asked her for a morsel. On her promising it, the dough began to grow beneath her hands, but an access of covetousness made her repent and refuse her gift, whereupon she was transformed into this bird and condemned to seek her living between the bark and the wood’—vol. ii, p. 325. The lurid flash of suggestion issues from the Queen’s name, the *owl* is probably only an ideal metamorphosis arising from Ophelia’s madness, though the story may have been altered in the course of transmission from Scandinavia to England.
46. *St Valentine’s day*—14th February. St Valentine, a priest of Rome, was martyred by being beaten with clubs and then beheaded, about 270 A.D. His day being near the date of the Roman *Lupercalia*, some of the ceremonies of that heathen festival, modified to Christian ends, were adapted by the Church. One of these was the choosing of mates by lot. In *St Proxede’s Church at Rome*, the greater part of the remains

- of this anchorite are said to be preserved. The Porta del Popolo was formerly called Valentine's Gate.
71. *Hugger-mugger*—secretly, in private. See Sir Vaughan's desire to have 'one word with you, Sir Quintilian, in hugger-mugger,' in Thomas Dekkar's *Satiromastix*, 1602. In Florio's *Italian Dictionary*, 1598, we find, 'Dinascoso—secretly, hiddenly, in hugger-mugger.' In Cyril Tourneur's *Revenger's Tragedy*, 1608, we read, sig. H, 4, 'How quaintly he died, like a politician in Hugger-mugger.'
82. *Murdering piece*—from French *mœurrière*, a piece of artillery.
84. *Switzers*—bodyguard. Malone quotes 'law, logic, and the Switzers may be hired to fight for anybody,' from *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*, by Thomas Nash, 1594. The Clarendon Press editors remark, 'In Shakespeare's time, Switzers or Swiss were employed to guard the person of the King of France, as Scotchmen had formerly been. Probably the same usage extended to other Continental courts. To this day the Pope's bodyguard consists of Swiss. Being foreigners, and therefore unconnected with any local faction, they could be better trusted.'
97. *Counter*—hunting backwards the way the chase has come.
134. *Life-rendering pelican*. 'The pelican loveth too much her children. For when the children bee taught and beginne to waxe hoare, they smite the father and the mother in the face; wherefore the mother smiteth them againe and slaieth them. And the third daye the mother smiteth herselfe in her side, that the blood runneth out, and sheddeth that hot blood uppon the bodies of hir children. And by virtue of the blode the birdes that were before dead, quicken againe'—Stephen Batman upon *Bartholome his Booke De Proprietatibus Rerum*, 1582, fol. 186b.
149. *Nature is fine in love*. Compare Iago's saying to Roderigo, 'If thou be'st valiant, as they say, base men, being in love, have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them'—*Othello*, II, i, 216.
159. *Wheel*—a round (*rota*), the refrain or burden of a song.
164. *Document*—from *doceo*, I teach; instruction, precepts carefully delivered. So Fidelia, at Una's request, taught the Redcrosse Knight from her sacred book:
- 'And heavenly documents thereout did preach'  
—Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, I, x, 19.
162. *Rosemary*. The celebrated divine, Roger Hacket, speaking of rosemary, says: 'It overtoppeth all the flowers in the garden, boasting man's rule. It helpeth the braine, it strengtheneth the memorie, and is very medicinable for the head. Another property of the *rosemary* is, it affecteth the heart. Let this *rosmarinus*, the flower of men, ensigne of your wisdom, love, and loyaltie, be carried not only in your hands but in your hearts and heads'—*Sermons: A Ministry*.

*Present, 1607.* The silvery foliage of the rosemary (*rosmarinus*, dew of the sea) and its purple flower made the plant a favourite both at funerals and marriages; and it was called, Lyte tells us, ‘Rosmarinum coronarium, that is to say, Rose-marie, whereof they make crowns and garlands.’ It was formerly esteemed a balsam for the memory, and an invigorator of the mental powers. In Michael Drayton’s *Idea; the Shepheard’s Garland*, 1593, we have the following illustration of flowers which ‘a secret meaning bear’:

‘He from his lass him lavender hath sent,  
Showing her love, and doth requital crave.  
Him rosemary, his sweetheart, whose intent  
Is that he her should in *remembrance* have,  
Roses his youth and strong desires express;  
Her sage doth show his sovereignty in all;  
The July-flowers declare his gentleness;  
Thyme, truth; the pansy, heart’s-ease maidens call’  
—*Eglogues*, ix.

163. *Pansies.* Though it is not customary in popular language to term the heart s-ease a violet, yet such it really is. Pansy, heart’s-ease, three-faces-under-a-hood, herb-trinity, kit-run-about, and love-in-idleness, are among the many names by which this flower is familiarly known. In the neighbourhood of Stratford-on-Avon, extensive grounds are laid out for the culture of the violet, for the purposes of the chemist. *Pansy* is a corruption of the French word *pensee* (thought). Ben Jonson spells it ‘paunse.’ There are two wild species, *Viola tricolor* and *Viola lutea*, besides the garden varieties introduced from France, Germany, and Switzerland, *Viola odorata*, *Viola amæna*, etc.

166. *Fennel.* *Foeniculum vulgare*, commonly called love-in-a-mist, grows wild by the sea-shore, and its umbels of white flowers appear in July. Its savoury odour, which makes it a suitable sauce-plant, is derived from its aromatic seeds, which are by some thought to be the *cummin* which the Pharisees tithed so scrupulously in Scripture times. It was emblematical of flattery.

*Ib. Columbines.* The columbine (*Aquilegia*) is so called in English, Dr Darwin says, ‘because its sectary represents the body of a bird, and the two petals, standing on each side, its expanded wings, the whole resembling a nest of young pigeons fluttering while their parent feeds them.’ It represented thanklessness and forlornness:

‘The columbine in tawny often taken  
Is then ascribed to such as are forsaken.’  
—Brown’s *Britannia’s Pastorals*, I, ii.

*Ib. Rue* was called herb-o'-grace (see *Richard II*) because handfuls of the plant were used by the priests to sprinkle holy water upon the congregations assembled for public worship.

169. *Daisy.* Perhaps this was not the ‘wee modest crimson-tipped

flower' of Burns, nor 'the bright day's eye' of Ben Jonson, or 'the gentle marguerite' of Chaucer, or 'the little dazie, that at evening closes' of Spenser; but the ox-eye daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*), a flower which, though ornamental to the field, is so injurious to the pasture that by one of the laws of Denmark its eradication is enforced by severe penalties. It was formerly called *Maudelyne-wort*.

169. *Violets*. In former times various flowers bore the name of violets—the snowdrop was called the Narcissus violet; wall-flower, the Guernsey violet; honesty, in addition to that of moonwort, had the name of strange violet; two species of gentian were called, one the autumn bell-flower or Calathian violet, and another Marion's violet; the periwinkle, now generally known in France by the name of *pervenche*, went in former times by the name of *violette des sorciers*, and our own favourite wild sweet violet, *violette de Mars*, the March violet. The violet is the loveliest of native flowers from its 'mingled hues of every sort, blue, white, and purple.'
172. *Bonny sweet robin*. In the books of the Stationers Company, 26th April 1594, there is an entry of 'A Ballad, entituled A Doleful Adewe to the last Erle of Darbie, to the tune of "Bonny Sweet Robin." "Sweet Robin" was the pet name by which the mother of Essex addressed him in her letters.—Gerald Massey's *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 480.
175. *And will he not*, etc. This song was parodied in 1605 in *Eastward Hoe*, by Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, thus:

His head was as white as milk,  
All flaxen was his hair;  
But now he is dead  
And laid in his bed  
And never will come again'—III, iii, 95-99.

203. *The great axe*. Matt. iii, 10; Luke, iii, 9.

#### SCENE VI.

13. *Means*—mode of access.  
19. *Thieves of mercy*—merciful thieves.  
23. *The bore*—the calibre; the weight of the matter is such that it would bear heavier words.

#### SCENE VII.

18. *General gender*—common people.  
20. *Spring*. Those which, like the dropping well on the banks of the Nid at Knaresborough, by their limestone deposits, 'petrify' articles exposed to its influence.  
21. *Gyves to graces*—that which binds and braces into ornamental forms.  
28. *Challenger on mount*—unequalled, unmatched. Like the challenger to all opponents of the rights to the crown of the

sovereign at whose accession he officiates, and by consent unopposed.

32. *Beard.* To seize and shake by the beard was regarded as a gross and unbearable insult.

50. *Character*—handwriting. *Twelfth Night*, V, i, 354.

66. *Practice*—plot, contrivance. *King Lear*, I, ii, 163; II, i, 73.  
67-80. *My lord . . . . graveness.* Omitted in folio 1623.

86. *Incorp'sd*—so joined as to form one body.

88. *Forgery*—power to form an idea of; imagination.

91-93. *Lamond.* The complimentary terms used of this person, G. R. French regards as ‘meant for Sir Walter Raleigh.’ Malone would read La Mode, ‘the brooch and gem of all the nation,’ indeed. C. E. Browne thinks ‘it is not impossible that this is an allusion to Pietro Monte (in a Galli-cised form), the famous cavalier and swordsman, who is mentioned by Castiglione (*Il Cortegiano*, i), as the instructor of Louis VII’s Master of Horse. In the English translation [by Sir Thomas Hoby, entitled *The Courtier*, 1561 and 1588] he is called Peter Mounte.’

99-101. *The scrimers . . . . them.* Omitted in folio 1623. French *escrieur*, a fencer.

113-122. *There lives within . . . . the ulcer.* These ten lines are not in folio 1623.

116. *Plurisy* ought, Upton says, to be *plethora*.

126. *Sanctuarie*—afford immunity to. The allusion here is to the Jewish sanctuary whose brazen altar afforded a place of refuge and protection to criminals, and gave them ‘the holy privilege of blessed sanctuary’—*Richard III*, III, i, 42. What glib morality here flows from the lips of one who has not only murdered, but is even now about to prompt a murder!

142. *Cataplasm*—poultice, soft or moist application for the discussing or dispersing of tumours or suppurating sores.

160. *Stuck*—thrust. Italian *stoccata*.

165. *A willow . . . stream.* This willow, the *Salix alba*, grows plentifully on the banks of the Avon, near Stratford, and may often be seen growing aslant.

168. Beisly supplies in his *Shakespeare’s Garden*, p. 159, the following explanation of this line from ‘the language of flowers’:—

Crowflowers,                    Nettles,                    Daisies, and Long purples.  
Farey mayde.                 Stung to the quick.            Virgin bloom.            Cold in death.

*Ib.* *Crowflowers.* Perhaps the *Allium vineale* or crow-garlick, which grows as tall as the midsummer corn, and holds up its pale pink flowers boldly among it; and perhaps some one of the many sorts of the buttercup; both kinds of wild flowers grow prolifically along the reaches of the Avon.

*Ib.* *Nettles.* The (*Urtica dioica*) common bright, ovate-leaved, greyish-green flowered plant, whose sharp sting is so well known.

**168. Long purples.** We have seen the finely-tinted spikes of the purple loose-strife (*Lythum salicaria*) in abundance on the banks of the Avon, near Stratford, with stems fully a yard in length; but many commentators consider the meadow purple-flowered orchis (*mascula*) rather than this, to be the long purple to which Shakespeare refers.

**172. Sliver**—a branch stripped lengthwise from a tree.

The following scene, which in the first quarto, 1603, takes first place in IV, vii, differs so materially from the matter of the revised play, that it may not be unacceptably put before the reader:

*Enter HORATIO and the QUEEN.*

*Hor.* Madam, your son is safe arriv'd in Denmark,  
This letter I even now receiv'd of him,  
Whereas he writes how he escap'd the danger,  
And subtle treason that the king had plotted;  
Being crossed by the contention of the winds,  
He found the packet sent to the king of England,  
Wherein he saw himself betrayed to death,  
As at his next conversion with your grace  
He will relate the circumstance at full.

*Queen.* Then I perceive there's treason in his looks,  
That seem'd to sugar o'er his villainy:  
But I will soothe and please him for a time,  
For murderous minds are always jealous;  
But know not you, Horatio, where he is?

*Hor.* Yes, madam, and he hath appointed me  
To meet him on the east side of the city  
To-morrow morning.

*Queen.* O fail not, good Horatio, and withal command me  
A mother's care to him, bid him awhile  
Be wary of his presence, lest that he  
Fail in that he goes about.

*Hor.* Madam, never make doubt of that:  
I think by this the news be come to court  
He is arriv'd: observe the king, and you shall  
Quickly find, Hamlet being there,  
Things fell not to his mind.

*Queen.* But what became of Gilderstone and Rossencraft?

*Hor.* He being set ashore, they went for England,  
And in the packet there writ down that doom  
To be perform'd on them pointed for him:—  
And by great chance he had his father's seal,  
So all was done without discovery.

*Queen.* Thanks be to Heaven for blessing of the prince.  
Horatio, once again I take my leave,  
With thousand mother's blessings to my son.

*Hor.* Madam, adieu.

ACT V.—SCENE I.

**4. Straight**—immediately, at once. See *As You Like It*, III, v, 135.  
**To** *Crownier* is not, as is generally supposed, a corruption of

- the clown's, but is the word used by Holinshed for the Low Latin term *coronator*, from *corona*, a crown.
9. *Se offendendo*—in self-injury, used intentionally by Shakespeare instead of *se defendendo*, in self-defence.
27. *Even Christian*. *Even* means *fellow*, occupying the same level. So it is used by Thomas Wilson in his *Rhetorique*, 1535 : ‘Beasts and birds without reason love one another, they shroud and they flock together; and shall man endued with such gifts hate his *even Christian* and eschew company?’  
—p. 119.
34. *The Scripture says Adam digged*. Gen. iii, 23.
49. *Unyoke*—end your task. Alluding to Samson's riddle, *Judges*, xiv.
- 52, 53. *Mass . . . cudgel*. *Mass* from Greek *μάστη*, I knead or press; Italian *massa*, a heap; French, *masse*, a heap, a club. *Mass*, the service of the Romish Church in the celebration of the Eucharist, suggests *mass*, a mace or club, and that *cudgel* from Welsh *cogel*, from *cög*, a short piece of wood.
56. *Yaughan*. This word does not appear in 1603 and 1604 quartos. Can it be that it is a ‘survival’ of the *Poetaster* quarrel of 1601? In Dekkar's *Satironastix*, we find Sir Rees ap Vaughan encouraging Horace (Ben Jonson) to hope for his patronage, saying, ‘I have some cosenz-german at court shall beget you the reversion of the Master of the King's Revels, or else be his Lord of Misrule now at Christmas;’ and if this were a misprint for Vaughan, it would mean that the first grave-digger advises his fellow to betake himself to that fitting patron of such dull wits as he.
58. This song is taken from a poem entitled *The Aged Lover renounceth Love*, though in a somewhat altered fashion, either because the verses had been corrupted in their transmission, or purposely disguised the better to suit the character of an illiterate clown. A copy of the song, with the music, is extant in MSS. Sloane, No. 4900. It first appeared in Tottel's *Miscellany*, 1557. See Arber's *Reprint*, p. 173. The original is published in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, where, on the authority of George Gascoigne, it is attributed to Thomas Lord Vaux (1512-1562) of Harrowden, in Northamptonshire. It also appears in Rev. Dr A. B. Grosart's *Miscellanies*, as copied from the Harleian MSS., No. 1703, fol. 100, as a *Dytte representinge the Image of D.a.the*. The verses in the latter copy, resembling those used in the play, runs as follows :

‘I loathe that I dyd love  
 In youth that I thought sweete,  
 As tym requireth for my behoove,  
 Meethinkes they are not mete.  
 Ffor age with stealinge steppes,  
 Hath claude me with his cruch,  
 And lustye youth away her leapes,  
 As there had been none such.’

• • • • •

A pick-axe and a spade,  
And eke a windinge sheete,  
A house of clay for to be made  
For such a rest most meete.'

83. *Mazard*—from French *macheoir*, the law.  
 85. *Lograts*—a sort of Aunt Sally: throwing logs at a mark.  
 91. *The skull of a lawyer*, etc. It has been pointed out by C. E. Browne that in Raynolde's *Dolarny*: *Primerous*, etc., this passage is versified:

'Why might not this have beene some lawier's case,  
The which sometimes bribed, brawled, and took a fee,  
And law exacted to the highest rate;  
Why might not this be such a one as he?  
Your quips and quyllers, now, sir, where be they?  
Now he is mute and not a word can say,' etc.

130. *Kibe*—a chilblain on the heel. *Tempest*, II, i, 276; *Lover*, I, v, 9. Florio's *Italian Dictionary*, 1598, gives 'Bagnacu—kibes or chilblains,' and 'Pernione—a kibe on the heele, or a chilblane on the hands.'
141. *There the men are as mad as he*. Steevens quotes in Illustration:

'Nimirum insanus paucis videatur. et quod  
Maxima pars hominum morte jacatur edem.'  
—Horace, *Satires*, II, iii, xx.

'Of course he seemeth mad but to a few of these;  
For most men are afflicted by the same disease.'

169. *Yorick*. 'It is very probable that the Yorick here described was one of the court-fools hired to divert the leisure hours of Queen Elizabeth. And it is most likely that our author celebrated the famous *Clod*—a clown of uncommon wit and ready observation—who died sometime before the accession of James I'—THOMAS DAVIES.
212. *The order* [of the service for the dead].
214. *For*—instead of, in place of.
221. *Requiem*—a mass sung for the rest of the soul of the dead, from the first word of the service:

'*Requiem eternam dona eis, Domine*,' etc.

'*Grant Thou to them, O Lord, eternal rest*,' etc.

223. *From her . . . violets spring*. So Persius says:

'E tumulo, fortunataque favilla  
Nascentur violæ'—*Satire*, I, 39.

'From her tomb and blessed ashes  
May violets spring.'

237. *Old Pelion.* A range of mountains, in the district of Magnesia in Thessaly, celebrated in mythology. The giants, in their wars with the gods, are said to have attempted to pile Olympus on Pelion, or Pelion and Ossa on Olympus, that they might scale heaven. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, i, 151-162.
238. *Olympus.* A range of mountains between Macedonia and Thessaly, 9700 feet in height, on the summit of which the dynasty of the gods had their residence.
240. *Wandering stars*—the planets, ‘because they never keep one certain place or station in the firmament.’
245. *Splenitive*—fretful, peevish, fiery, passionate. The spleen was anciently regarded as the seat of anger. See *Midsummer Night's Dream*, I, i, 146; *I Henry IV*, V, ii, 19; *Taming of a Shrew*, III, ii, 10.
251. *Wag*—move up and down.
260. *Drink up.* *Up* here is an intensive particle, as in *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, iii, 305, V, ii, 824; *King John*, IV, iii, 133; and *As You Like It*, II, i, 62.
- Ib.* *Eisel.* ‘*Eisel* is either *eysell* (*i.e.* vinegar or wormwood wine) or the name of a Danish river (*Yssel*)’—Dr C. M. Ingleby, *The Still Lion*, p. 36. This word has puzzled the commentators as thoroughly as the ‘dram of eale,’ ‘Vaughan,’ etc., which are the *enigmas* in this play. The quarto 1603 gives *vessel*, the other quartos *esill*, the folios *esile*. Hanmer read *Nile*; Capell, *elsil*, as probably a brook near Elsinore; Caldecott adopts the *Yssel*, the most northern branch of the Rhine, and that one which flows nearest to Denmark. Steevens quotes from Stowe, p. 725: ‘It standeth a good distance from the river *Issil*, but hath a source on *Isself* of incredible strength;’ and from Drayton’s *Polyolbion*:

‘The one o'er Isell's banks the ancient Saxon taught  
At Over-Isell rests,’ etc.—*Song xxiv*, p. 359, ed. 1748.

S. W. Singer adopted *eysel*, wormwood wine or vinegar, following Theobald. Gerald Massey suggests *eye-sel* with the meaning of repentant tears, and quotes:

‘Dost thou drink tears that thou provokest such weeping?’  
—*Venus and Adonis*.

Tschischwitz prints *esula* as *euphorbia esula*, spurge, a poisonous plant used as an emetic; the late J. B. Dykes noted that *isyl*, an old word, meant *ashes*, but Furness and many others agree to accept *eysell*. Shakespeare says:

‘I will drink  
Potions of eysell 'gainst my strong infection;  
No bitterness that I will bitter think’—*Sonnet cxi*, 9-12.

As analogies to the river explanation, these lines have been quoted:

'Else would I set my mouth to Tygris stremes  
And drink up overflowing Euphrates'

—R. Greene's *Orlando Furioso*, 1599, Dyce's ed. 1861, p. 105, col. 2.

'Come, drink up Rhine, Thames, and Meander dry'  
—*Westward Hoe*, Decker's Dramatic Works, ii, p. 311.

267. *Ossa*. A famous mountain in the north of Thessaly, divided from Olympus by the Vale of Tempe. Otus and Ephialtes 'attempted to place Ossa upon Olympus, and upon Ossa leafy Pelion, that heaven might be accessible'—*Odyssey*, xi, 390.
268. *I'll rant as well as thou*. 'It is the churchyard scene . . . from which we are to learn the moral of this tragedy; a scene which has been regarded as an exuberant excrescence, but one which seems to us to be a chief corner-stone of the main edifice, for there we see the nothingness of all sub-lunary advantages—there we see how gaiety, beauty, talent, and wit—how greatness and power—nay, how even the government of a world, are not only transient in themselves, but how in the end they lead to nothing.'—GEO. EGESTORF.
270. *Anon . . . drooping*. This passage seems to dispose of a criticism in *Blackwood's Magazine*, probably by Thomas Campbell (II, 504, etc.), in these terms: 'Hamlet is afterwards made acquainted with the sad history of Ophelia; he knows that to the death of Polonius, and his own imagined (feigned) madness is to be attributed her miserable catastrophe. Yet after the burial scene he seems utterly to have forgotten that Ophelia ever existed; nor is there, as far as I recollect, a single allusion to her throughout the rest of the drama. The only way of accounting for this seems to be that Shakespeare had himself forgotten her, that with her last rites she vanished from the world of his memory.' Here we have hint of another way of accounting for this fact. Shakespeare knew that the deeper griefs of the soul are nursed and guarded in silence most carefully within the sufferer's own heart.

## SCENE II.

6. *Bilboes*—from Bilboa, the chief town of Biscay, in Spain, famous from Roman times for the manufacture of iron and steel. Bilbo was a sword-blade, but bilboes are stocks used on shipboard, having a bar of iron to which rings were fastened, into which the legs of prisoners were put.
10. *There's . . . we will*. *Prov.* xvi, 9, 33.
13. *Sea-grown scarf'd*—a coarse, short-sleeved overcoat, commonly worn by sailors; flung on like a scarf (Norman-French *escarfe*) loosely, without putting the arms into the sleeves.
22. *Bugs*—frightful spectres; from Welsh *bwg*, to frighten, or Slavonic *bog*, deity. 'It is,' Dr R. G. Latham says, 'almost certainly the same word as *Puck*, perhaps the root of *Bacchus*.

Nearly two thousand years later it was adopted by Shakespeare; perhaps as the name of a goblin of the Avon and the Forest of Arden'—*See Winter's Tale*, III, ii, 23.

23. *Supervise*—first glance at it; reading.  
 33. *Statists*—statesmen. So employed by Ben Jonson, 'Your statist's face; a serious, solemn, and supercilious face, full of formal and square gravity'—*Cynthia's Revels*, II, iii.

'He will screw you out a secret from a statist'

—*The Magnetic Lady*, I, f. vii.

'That fluency and grace as are required both in a statist and a courtier'—*The Antiquary* (attributed to Shakerly Mar-mion), 1641, I, i, 61.

36. *Yeoman's service*—faithful and effective dutifulness. 'In regard,' as Lord Bacon says, 'that the middle people of England make good soldiers'—*On the Greatness of Kingdoms*, etc.  
 42. *Comma*. 'Here used as opposed to "period" or full stop, and in this view a mark of connection, not division'—*Clarendon Press Editors*; but S. W. Singer says: 'It is evident that peace is personified, and if we read "stand a co-mere 'tween their amities," it would be that Peace might stand as a mark or evidence between them. A co-mere would be a joint landmark, the *lapis terminalis* of the ancients, and it should be remembered that the god of *meres*, or bounds, *Terminus*, was wont to end the strifes and controversies of people in dividing their lands.' Warburton suggests 'a *commere*, a guarantee, a common mother.' Becket, Elze, Staunton, and Tschischwitz favour *comate*; Hanmer, Hudson, and White adopt *cement*; Bailey, *hold her olive*; Cartwright, *as one atween or as concord*; Wetherell, *at one*; Theobald, *no comma*. Clarke explains *comma* as a musical term, meaning 'the least of all the sensible intervals in music.' Caldecott quotes in favour of the text from Nicholas Breton's *Packet of Letters*, 1637: 'I feare the point of the sword will make a comma in your cunning'—p. 23. Johnson, Hunter, Heath, and Dyce accept the text. *Commerce* and *comare* have also been proposed as emendations.  
 45. *Debatement*—consideration. *Measure for Measure*, V, i, 99.  
 47. *Shriving-time*—opportunity of confession to a priest and getting absolution from him.  
 61. *Between the pass . . . opposites*. In *The Fratricide Punished*, Prince Hamlet brings about the death of the two bandits who there take the place of Guildenstern and Rosencrantz by asking them to allow him to offer up a prayer, next requesting them to shoot at him, one from each side, so as to inflict instant and certain death. He stands between them, cries out 'fire!' they shoot, and as he throws himself forward on his face on the ground, they give each other their *quietus*.  
 82. *Water-fly*—busy trifler. The water-fly is really a small beetle,

living in the water. They may be seen dimpling the surface of almost any pool on a sunny day, as they glide with rapidity and ease in mazy circles, diving down when disturbed and carrying with them a bright little bubble of air. The form of each is surrounded with an iridescent luminous ring. Perhaps the *ephemera*, which fling off their pupa-case very soon, assume a new form, and exist but for a brief interval, may be meant. Robert Paterson suggests that it is the *Gyrinus natator*, or water-flea, one of the nimble, frolicsome ‘diminutives of nature.’ See *Troilus and Cressida*, V, i, 38. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, V, ii, 59, the term is used for an insect we should now call a flesh-fly.

95. *It is indifferent cold*, etc. If not suggested by, this passage much resembles:

‘Natio comoeda est, rides? majore cachinno  
Concuditur; flet, se lachrymas cons;exit amici;  
Nec dolet; ignulum brumæ, si tempore poscas,  
Accipit endromidem, si dixeris aestuo, sudat’  
—Juvenal’s *Satira*, x, 100-104.

‘All Greeks are actors, and in this vain town  
Walk a short road to riches and renown.  
Smiles the great man? they laugh with noisy roar;  
Weeps he? their eyes with bidden tears run o'er;  
Asks he a fire in winter's usual cold?  
The warmest rugs their shivering limbs enfold;  
Pants he beneath the summer's common heat?  
Lo! they are bathed in sympathetic sweat’

—FRANCIS HODGSON, M.A.

Perhaps the character of Osric is not unindebted to Terence, whose *Gnatho*, the parasite, describes himself as one who sets himself among men:

‘Sed his ultro arrideo, et eorum ingenia admiror simul;  
Quicquid dicunt laudo; id rursum si negant, laudo id quoque;  
Negat quis, nego; ait, aio, postremo, imperavi egomet mihi,  
Omnia assentiri’ —*Eunuchus*, II, ii, 19-21.

‘For gain  
To laugh with them and wonder at their parts:  
Whate er they say, I praise it; if again  
They contradict, I praise that too; does any  
Deny? I too deny; affirm? I too  
Affirm; and in a word I've brought myself  
To say, unsay, swear, and forswear at pleasure.’ —COLMAN.

102. *Remember [thy courtesy]*, as in *Lov's Labour's Lost*, V, i, 103:

‘Remember thy courtesy, I do beseech thee; apparel thine head.’

‘The courtesy was the temporary removal of the hat from the head, and that was finished as soon as the hat was replaced. If any one, from ill-breeding or over-politeness, stood uncovered for a longer time than was necessary to perform the simple act of courtesy, the person so saluted reminded him of the fact that the removal of the hat was a courtesy, and this was expressed by the euphuism, “Re-

member thy courtesy," which thus implied, "Complete your courtesy, and replace your hat"—Dr C. M. Ingleby's *Still Lion*, p. 75.

- 104-137. Of all this matter, only line 132 occurs in folio 1623, and to it is added the words, 'at his weapon.'
112. *Yaw*. This is a sea-term signifying that a ship does not answer her helm, but moves unsteadily and untrustworthily.
145. *Responsive*—answerable, suitable.
151. *German*. In quarto 1603 the phrase is *cousin-german*. Chaucer has in the *Canterbury Tales*:

‘Eke Plato sayth, whoso can him rede  
The wordes mote ben cosyn to the dede  
—*Prologue*, 743, 744.

Shakespeare, to bring it close home, uses *cousin-german*; and now *german* or *germâne* has supplanted it entirely, and has passed into our current speech.

153. *Barbary horses*. Called by Beaumont and Fletcher 'dainty Barbaries' in *The Wildgoose Chase*. These horses, from which the English word 'barb' is derived, were highly prized in Western Europe before the Arabian steed was known.
159. *He hath laid on twelve for nine*. This means, 'not that he has laid twelve to nine, but that he has wagered for nine out of twelve. In a dozen passes six hits each would place them on a par, and Osric calls Laertes' excess the number of hits that he makes above his own half. This the king bets shall not exceed three, rendering the total amount nine'—*Quarterly Review*, March 1847.
175. *Lapwing*. It was thought that the young lapwing was in such haste to be hatched that it ran out of the shell with a piece of it sticking on its head, and there was a proverb that 'far from her nest the lapwing cries away'—*Comedy of Errors*, IV, ii, 23. See also *Measure for Measure*, I, iv, 32. Hamlet regards Osric as 'forward and insincere.'
201. *Gain-giving*—presentiment, foreboding. E. Forsyth proposed 'pain-giving.'
257. *Union*—'a great faire and oriente pearle,' of fine spherical form. See, 'our dainties and delicates here, at Rome, have devised this name for them and call them *Uniones*, as a man would say Singulars, and by themselves alone'—Holland's *Pliny's Natural History*, ix, 35. Cleopatra, as Pliny tells in the above-noted chapter, to win a bet from Antony, dissolved in vinegar and swallowed a pearl of the value of £80,729. In Shakespeare's own time, Sir Thomas Gresham, who had laid a wager, in 1571, that he would give a costlier dinner than the Spanish ambassador could, powdered a pearl valued at £15,000 and drank it off in a glass of wine to the health of Queen Elizabeth. Hence Thomas Heywood says:

'Here fifteen thousand pounds at one clap goes  
Instead of sugar, Gresham drinks the pearl  
Unto his queene and mistress—pledge it, lords.'

315. *Temper'd*—compounded, mixed. See *Cymbeline*, V, v, 250; *As You Like It*, I, ii, II.

322. *Mutes*—persons engaged in the dumb show of the piece.

323. *Fell sergeant, death, etc.* See Joshua Sylvester's translation of *The Divine Weekes and Works of Guillaume de Sallustius du Bartas*, 1592:

'And, death, dread sergeant of th' Eternal Judge,  
Comes very late to his sole-seated lodge'—III, i, III.

The idea here expressed appears to have taken hold of Shakespeare's mind, hence we have:

'When that fell arrest  
Without all bail shall carry me away'—*Sonnets*, lxxiv, 1.

328. *An antique Roman.* Compare in *Julius Caesar* Titinius' saying :

'By your leave, gods—this is a Roman's part;  
Come, Cassius' sword, and find Titinius' heart' (*Kills himself*)  
—V, v, 80.

Almost all the great men of Roman history died a violent death, and in a large majority of cases it was self-inflicted. Decimus Brutus and Cicero were almost the only distinguished 'antique' Romans who consented to live after the hope of living to any good purpose was lost, without laying hands on themselves. A few of the most famous of these were Cato (Uticensis), Cneius Pompeius, Livius Drusus Clodianus, Metellus Scipio Petreius, Marcus Brutus, Caius Cassius, Quintilius Varus, Labeo, Dolabella, and Antony the triumvir. See note in *Julius Caesar*, V, v.

347. *Flights of angels.* Malone thought that in writing these words Shakespeare had in mind the last words of Essex in his prayer on the scaffold, 'And when my soul and body shall part, send Thy blessed angels to be near unto me, which may convey it to the joys of heaven.' But *Hamlet* is a somewhat earlier play than Malone supposed. It must have been the last words of Horatio that were in the last thoughts of Essex, or else they were so familiar to him for personal reasons as to shape his last expressions unconsciously to himself'—Gerald Massey's *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 487.

369. *Casual*—accidental, unintended, happening by chance. 'If such a thing as this is, shall perchance befall to him at any time, as humane things are casuall'—R. Bernard's *Terence*, in English, 1598, p. 226, 1667.

382. *Four captains, etc.* The monument of Sir Francis Vere in Westminster Abbey, 1608, finely exemplifies these lines, and

show that at that time this was the customary mode of burial for a soldier of rank.

388. *Take up the bodies . . . here shows much amiss.* Joseph Hunter objects to the conclusion of this tragedy, that it exhibits a 'pandering to the corrupt English taste in tragedy,' that the audience loves 'a clear stage.' 'We start,' he says, 'with a ghost of a murdered king; then there die, the succeeding King, the Queen, Hamlet, Polonius and his two children, Laertes and Ophelia, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern. Of the conspicuous characters only Horatio is left alive'—*New Illustrations of Shakespeare*, vol. ii, p. 207. But a distinguished Shakespearian critic defends the poet from this opprobrium by thus explaining the *morale* of the catastrophe: 'The horrible harvest of death in the fifth act shows that aimless weakness, even though clad in the finest garb of intellectual keenness, spreads around it far more misery than the most inconsiderate violence'—F. Kreysig's *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare*, p. 263.
390. *Bid the soldiers shoot.* 'Hamlet has gained the haven for which he had longed so often, yet without bringing guilt on himself by his death; no fear that his sleep should have "bad dreams" in it now. Those whom he loved, his mother, Laertes, Ophelia, have all died guiltless or forgiven. Late, and under the strong compulsion of approaching death, he has done, and well done, the inevitable task from which his gentle nature shrank. Why then any further thought in the awful presence of death, of crimes, conspiracies, vengeance? Think that he has been slain in battle like his sea-king forefathers, and let the booming cannon be his mourners'—Rev. C. E. Moberly, M.A., *Rugby Hamlet*, p. 137.
- Ib.* *A dead march.* Might we not almost fancy that the following lines were written as an epilogue for *Hamlet*, to the music of this dead march?

'Your monument shall be my gentle verse,  
Which eyes not yet created shall o'erread;  
And tongues to be, your being shall rehearse,  
When all the breathers of this world are dead;  
You still shall live, such virtue hath my pen,  
Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.'

—*Sonnets, lxxi.*

## A P P E N D I X.

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### HAMLET'S AGE.

HAMLET asks the gravedigger (V, i, 130) ‘How long hast thou been a grave-maker?’ He answers: ‘Of all the days i’ the year, I came to’t that day that our last King Hamlet o’ercame Fortinbras.’ Hamlet questions again: ‘How long is that since?’ And is retorted to thus: ‘Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it was the very day that young Hamlet was born—he that is mad and sent to England.’ Further on, this privileged person says: ‘I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years’ (148); and referring to Yorick’s skull, tells that it ‘has lain in the earth three and twenty years’ (159). Hamlet’s thoughts then rush back to the time when he ‘knew him,’ etc. These quotations seem to make it certain that Hamlet is thirty years of age. To readers of the play who have time to note, mark, reflect on, and consider each statement—the inference is plain. But the Drama is an illusion. It represents life in an ‘abridgment,’ and must be performed under definite conditions, one main feature of which is the actor’s personality. Any very obvious discrepancy between what is seen and said so far destroys the pleasure of the ‘abstract and brief chronicle.’ The author, by his art, must conserve the probability of his representation and must avoid any jarring between the real and the ideal. Shakespeare knew this, and therefore he guards against an occurrence of that sort. So, unless we accept Mr H. Wyatt’s fine suggestion of *faint* for *fat*, or Herr Plewe’s conjecture of *hot* for the same word, in the expression, ‘He’s fat and scant of breath’ (V, ii, 273), he anticipates the actual in Burbadge’s performance of the part, and brings in a saving-clause regarding it. Nevertheless, the whole upbuilding of the character as he is brought before us gradually in the play, is such as to induce an idea of youthful manliness. He is first spoken of as ‘young Hamlet’ (I, i, 167), as ‘intent in going back to school in Wittenberg’ (I, ii, 113). Laertes advises Ophelia to ‘hold’ his ‘favour,’ as—

'A fashion and a toy in blood,  
A violet in the youth of primy nature'—I, iii, 6, 7.

For nature, crescent, does not grow alone  
In thews and bulk but as this temple waxes,  
The inward service of the mind and soul  
Grows wide withal'—I, iii, 11-14.

Polonius thereafter warns her too

'That he is young,  
And with a larger tether may he walk  
Than may be given you'—I, iii, 124-126.

The Ghost speaks of his tale as one that

'Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood'—I, v, 16;

and subsequently conjures him thus :

'Know, thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown'—I, v, 38-40.

To Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the king addresses himself, saying :

'I entreat you both,  
That being of so young days brought up with him,  
And since so neighboured to his youth and humour,  
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court  
Some little time'—II, ii, 10-14.

Ophelia, who is 'a young maid' (IV, v, 147), sees in him, as perhaps she should,

'The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,  
The observed of all observers'—III, i, 151-153.

In these lines Shakespeare excites in us the ideal; in the prosaic statements formerly set forth we find him, conquered by the real, endeavouring to harmonise both by such means as may at once satisfy the latter and gratify the former. The ideal is the real presented in perspective. In Shakespeare's ideal, Hamlet was, and required to be, a young man, not probably more than twenty-one; but as he required to be represented, he, attentive to stage effects, inserted in the *acting* copy such phrases as might suit the player. Printing has stereotyped what might have been changed at will, and hence a difficulty arises in the perused drama which is not felt in the acted one.

## HAMLET'S 'DOZEN OR SIXTEEN LINES.'

(See Act II, sc. ii, 517; Act III, sc. ii, 177-202.)

A critical question, first started, we believe, by Dr E. W. Sievers in his *Shakespeare's Hamlet fur weitere Kreise bearbeitet*, Leipzig, 1851, p. 142, regarding 'the dozen or sixteen lines' which the Prince of Denmark proposed to 'set down and insert' in the play of *The Murder of Gonzago*, has attracted so much attention as to require such an epitome as exceeds the length to which the notes, in such an edition of the play as this, can be advisably extended, and hence we have reserved a place for its discussion in the Appendix.

The hypothesis is, that as Shakespeare makes, or considered it important to make, Hamlet project the insertion of certain original lines in the old drama, he intended that the prince should prepare them, and the probability is that he did compose them, as he commences his instructions to the players (III, ii) with the words, 'Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you,' he excitedly asks, as Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern enter:

'How now, my lord! will the king hear *this piece of work!*'—III, ii, 42;

and while he tells Horatio in loving confidence that

'There is a play to-night before the king;  
*One scene* of it comes near the circumstance  
 Which I have told thee of my father's death'—III, ii, 70-72;

he also conjures him to give 'heedful note' as it goes on:

'I pr'ythee, when thou see'st *that act a-foot,*  
 Even with the very comment of thy soul  
 Observe mine uncle'—III, ii, 73-75.

These passages supply presumptive evidence that Hamlet had 'altered the manner of the murder in the old play to make it tally precisely with the awfully secret fact,' and his exclamation after the up-breaking of the court play, 'Would not *this*, sir, and a forest of feathers, etc., get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir' (III, ii, 260-263), implies that he has accomplished his purpose by the projected means. The problem thence arises, which are 'the dozen or sixteen lines' due to Hamlet, as stage-editor of the play performed. Sievers supposed that they were lines 240-245; and Professor Benno Tschischwitz, though carrying the quotation further, in the main agrees with him; while Mr and Mrs Cowden Clarke, to whom the question appears to have suggested itself independently as a matter of exegesis, rather suggest lines 177-202, and thus supported the opinion they had formed:

'We have an idea that this is the passage "of some dozen or sixteen lines" which Hamlet has proposed to "set down and in-

sert" in the play, asking the player whether he could "study" it for the occasion. The style of the diction is markedly different from the remainder of the dialogue belonging to this acted play of *The Murder of Gonzago*; and it is signally like Hamlet's own argumentative mode. . . . His motive in writing these additional lines for insertion, and getting the player to deliver them, we take to be a desire that they shall serve to divert attention from the special passages directed at the king, and to make these latter seem less pointed. . . . Observe how exactly the couplet commencing the player-king's speech, "I do believe," etc., and the couplet concluding it, "So think thou wilt," etc., would follow on conjoinedly, were the intervening lines (which we suppose intended to be those written by Hamlet) not inserted'—*Illustrated Shakespeare*, vol. iii, p. 415.

On the other hand, a distinguished critic of *Shakespeare's Versification*, 1857, the late Rev. Charles Bathurst, at p. 70 of his able little work, while investigating this very 'play acted by the players,' remarks: 'I do not see any symptoms of the lines which Hamlet was to insert.' Thus the question stood for nearly twenty years.

In 1874 the question assumed a controversial form. In a conversation between Mr F. J. Furnivall and J. R. Seeley, M.A., this question turned up, as one open to inquiry, without their knowing that it had previously been investigated. Mr Seeley remarked he could point to the passage in which 'the dozen or sixteen lines' occurred; and on trial—after being informed 'that the lines contained Hamlet's explanation of his own character'—Mr Furnivall laid his finger on the very lines the professor had in view. These lines are 175-204. On this topic, Mr W. T. Malleson, B.A., Univ. Coll., London, read a paper before the New Shakespeare Society (December 11, 1874), suggesting that 'we should look for Hamlet's addition' in lines 240-245; and that the speech, being interrupted by Hamlet, and the king's rising 'frightened by false fire,' was not finished. He objects that the lines referred to by Seeley and Furnivall 'reflect, as Gervinus (in *Shakespeare Commentaries*, Furnivall's edition, p. 553) points out, not upon the murdering, usurping king, but upon Hamlet himself; so that if they are those Hamlet wrote, we find him turning aside from the immediate purpose of the player's performance, which was to "catch the conscience of the king," in order to brood over his own character.' Though 'there would be nothing foreign in Hamlet's character in thus suddenly putting aside action for disquisition, yet' . . . . 'it is difficult to believe that he is only anxiously seeking an opportunity of dissertating upon man's feebleness of purpose.' 'His hope was, that his lines might drive the dreadful resemblance home to the very heart of the murderer.' From the speech to the players, 'we may gather something of the nature of the lines; there was in them, for certain, the torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of passion.' '*In the philosophic lines suggested by Professor Seeley;*' can there be found 'anything of passion with which to split the ears of the

groundlings?' In the sub-play, the one scene coming near the circumstances of Hamlet's father's death, as the Ghost describes it (I, v, 59-64), is that in which Lucianus acts; and Hamlet, in the very agony and fever of his impatience, interrupts him; and therefore he concludes that 'Hamlet's addition to the play begins with the speech of Lucianus.' Professor Seeley acknowledges 'a good deal of weight in Mr Malleson's objections,' but he supports his own views by stating that—(1) In the long speech of the player-king may be found a passage of 'twelve or sixteen lines,' of which he thinks *the speech* must consist; (2) 'This passage can be omitted without damage to the action,' a characteristic which *the speech*, as an insertion, must, he thinks, show; (3) 'No other such passage can be found in the sub-play, so that those who reject this passage are driven to the shift of supposing that Shakespeare, after promising such a passage and leading us to expect it, has not given it'; (4) 'The passage suits Hamlet's character better than any other in the sub-play'; (5) It suits Hamlet's views and feelings at the moment, which are occupied only secondarily with his uncle's guilt, primarily with his mother's misconduct; (6) The insertion of it seems an object of the poet by showing more clearly the doubleness of Hamlet's conduct, and that while he was forced reluctantly by a sense of duty in one direction, his feelings and reflections were flowing irresistibly in another. Mr Malleson replies—(1) Hamlet never says he *has written* a passage of so many lines and inserted it; (2) The inserted lines need not be such as can be removed without affecting the action of the play, for Hamlet may have inserted his lines in substitution for others which he struck out. Professor Seeley says that 'a passage plainly removable answers Hamlet's description much better than one which is not.' 'But as Shakespeare was in reality author of both text and sermon, he wove them together so much that, though I think he left it quite clear that Hamlet's copy of verses is here, yet he did not make it possible to say, with absolute certainty, where [the insertion] began.'

Mr Furnivall subsequently came to think (1) that in fact the speech is not in the printed play, or (2) that Hamlet had more thoroughly adapted the whole play to his purpose. Mr Simpson points out that 'the description of these sub-plays never answers to their performance' (see *The Spanish Tragedy*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Histriomastix*, etc.); and Dr Brinsley Nicolson thinks 'the speech is Shakespeare's own vindication of his thoughts and mode of expressing them.' Dr C. M. Ingleby holds that 'a drama is a work of art, a contrivance for imposing upon the spectator.' 'It is a rule of dramatic art that a dramatic expedient not essential to the play, introduced for a collateral object, is to be left out of consideration as soon as that object is attained.' 'The court play is but a part of *Hamlet*.' Shakespeare wrote the whole play, the *Murder of Gonsago* included, for that was a part of his plan. Shakespeare introduces the phrase, 'some dozen or sixteen lines'—(1) as a preparation for introducing Hamlet's advice to the players;

(2) to lessen the impossibility of Hamlet's finding in the rôle of the actors just such a drama as would suit Hamlet's proposed aim. Horace Howard Furness decides that 'the discussion that has arisen over these "dozen or sixteen lines" is a tribute to Shakespeare's art. Ingleby, I think, is right in maintaining that Shakespeare did not first write *The Murder of Gonzago*, and then insert in it certain lines as though written by Hamlet. And Sievers, the Clarkes, Malleson, and others, are also right, I think, in believing that certain lines of the court play—which, we may imagine, are those that Hamlet told the player he would give him—are especially applicable to Claudius. It is the very impression which, I think, Shakespeare wished to convey.' (*See Transactions of the New Shakespeare Society*, 1874, part ii, pp. 465-498; Furness' *Hamlet*, vol. i, pp. 247-251.)

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#### TIME-ANALYSIS OF THE PLOT OF 'HAMLET.'

'The drama being an imitation, a similitude of nature, is not nature itself but a copy, whose excellence depends on the amount of illusion with which the poet can invest it.' He must, therefore, while copying, idealise nature and compress the space and time of the reality so as to suit the purpose of his ideal creation. Hence the poetic unity differs from the unity of actual life. The strict observance of the actual unities of time and place is dispensed with in the modern drama, and the more reasonable definition of duration of time set forth by Aristotle has either wittingly or unwittingly been adopted by the romance dramatists, but especially by Shakespeare, viz., that 'tragedy is a representation of a whole action through all its intermediate parts, that the action represented should be interesting and perspicuous, and that the time of its duration ought to be such as to render it possible that the transitions to be shown taking place could in a probable or necessary order have occurred.\* It may aid the student to comprehend this art of the dramatic poet better if we present a concise time-analysis of the duration of the action in the play of Hamlet, and show the links of time-reference the testing supplies.

'Dramatic time is a very different thing from natural time.' 'For the complete evolution of a noble and comprehensive action, or for the full and satisfactory development of the human character,' a long time is required. Life has level commonplace periods between those of its crises. Though it requires in our actual experience of the world weeks or months to become acquainted with the whole man, his passions, and his temperament, the dramatist must set before us both plot and character within the narrowest possible bounds. The poet produces his [effects] by a series of [scenes and]

\* Aristotle's *Poetics*, chap. vii.

dates skilfully graduated through a series of events from that which is actually visible and palpable to the *eyes*, to those transmitted only to the *ears*, or suggested to the spectator's *imagination*, through a hundred different channels, until the impression left upon his mind is an impression composed of the visible and invisible, the natural and the dramatic, the real and the illusory'—J. N. Halpin's *The Unities of Shakespeare*, 1849 (reprinted), edited by Dr C. M. Ingleby; in *Transactions of the New Shakespeare Society*, 1875, pp. 388-412.

Act I embraces a period of nearly two days—the first night, the intervening day, and the following night somewhat into morning; Act II beginning at a short interval, perhaps a month thereafter—for the ambassadors who had been sent to Norway have gone, completed their diplomatic mission, and return in the second act; and Laertes, who, in Act I had set out from Elsinore to Paris, has reached his destination, has conveyed tidings of his arrival, and preferred a request for money—occupies one day. Polonius sends Reynaldo to Laertes with the money; Hamlet has put his 'antic disposition on,' and frightened Ophelia, who reports the occurrence to her father, who immediately conveys the tidings to the king and queen. While they are planning a snare for Hamlet, he enters reading; Polonius converses with him, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern inform him of their meeting with the players, who arrive, and are introduced while the conversation is going on. Hamlet gets 'a taste of their quality,' and commands a play for to-morrow night, by means of which he anticipates being able to 'catch the conscience of the king.' Act III commences the next day and continues beyond midnight. Act IV brings before us the queen speaking of what she had 'seen to-night,' so that it immediately succeeds in time Act III; and the king resolves to have Hamlet hence to-night. Hamlet, on his way to embarkation, meets Fortinbras going to Poland; and we may suppose that he takes ship immediately thereafter. Meanwhile, news of his father's death has been sent to Laertes at Paris, which he leaves at once for Elsinore, where he arrives with a rabble of Danes, whom he has on his way excited to rebellion. There he sees his sister crazed with grief, and determines that her

\* Madness shall be paid by weight  
Till our scale turn the beam'—IV, v, 144, 145.

Hamlet had been 'two days old at sea,' had fought, and become the prisoner of the pirates. They had brought him back to Denmark, and he had sent letters to Horatio, his mother, and the king, by sailors who had reached Elsinore with them. At least a fortnight, probably a month, must therefore be allowed for Act IV, which closes with the account of Ophelia's death.

Act V opens with Ophelia's funeral, probably the day after her death, for the king says to Laertes :

\* Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech'—V, i, 272.

Hamlet's arrival, and the quarrel-scene in the graveyard. Hamlet in the next scene tells Horatio the story of his voyage, receives the challenge sent to him at the king's suggestion by Osric, and accepts of it 'now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now'—v, ii, 189. The duel commences almost immediately on the arrival of the king and queen. The *dénouement* occurs. Fortinbras, who had gone to Poland, fought and conquered, returns to see it, and 'the rest is silence.' The whole action, therefore, is comprised within a period of less than three months.\*

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### THE MADNESS OF HAMLET.

That Hamlet was regarded as mad in the early days of the production of this play, we may readily gather from the notices of it that have come down to us. In Antony Scoloker, an admirer of 'friendly Shakespeare's' tragedies, we read: 'Faith, it should please all, like Prince Hamlet. But in sadness, then it were to be feared he would runne mad; forsooth, I will not be moonsicke to please, nor out of my wits though I displeased all.'† In *Westward Hoe!* 1607, Tenterhooks proposes to 'play mad Hamlet and crie revenge'—*Deckar's Works*, vol. ii, p. 353, 1873. E. M. Hood, in 1620, lamenting the death of the famous actor, R. Burbadge, says:

'Oft have I seen him leape into a grave  
Suiting the person (which he used to have)  
Of a mad lover.'

Sir Thomas Hanmer, in *Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet*, 1736, says, that 'to conform to the groundwork of his plot, Shakespeare makes the young prince feign himself mad. . . . There appears no reason at all in nature why this young prince did not put the usurper to death as soon as possible, especially as Hamlet is represented as a youth so brave and so careless of his own life. The case indeed is this, had Hamlet gone naturally to work, there would have been an end of our play. The poet, therefore, was obliged to delay his hero's revenge; but then he should have contrived some good reason for it. His beginning his scenes of madness by his behaviour to Ophelia was judicious, because by this means he might be thought to be mad for her, and not that his brain was disturbed about state affairs, which would have been dangerous'—p. 33. Dr Samuel Johnson similarly observes: 'Of the

\* See further on this subject, Dr Ludwig Eckardt's *Vorlesungen über Hamlet*, 1853; 'Fechter as Hamlet' in *The Atlantic Monthly*, November 1870; Dr Jacob Heussi's *Shakespeare's Hamlet, Erklärt* 1872; George B. Ward's *Essays*, 1873, etc.

† *Diaphantus; or the Passions of Love*, 1604.

feigned madness of Hamlet, there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of saint. He plays the madman most when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty'—*The Plays of Shakespeare*, 1765, vol. viii, p. 311. 'Hamlet was fully sensible how strange these improprieties must appear to others; he was conscious he could not suppress them; he knew he was surrounded with spies, and he was justly apprehensive lest his suspicions or purposes should be discovered. But how are these consequences to be prevented? By counterfeiting an insanity which in part exists'—Professor William Richardson's *Shakespeare's Dramatic Characters*, 1786, p. 163.

'Aaron Hill,' we are told by Davies, in *Dramatic Miscellanies*, iii, 148, 1785, 'above forty years ago—in a paper called *The Prompter*—observed, that besides Hamlet's assumed insanity, there was in him a melancholy which bordered on madness, arising from his peculiar situation.' Dr Mark Akenside, the poet, we are told by Steevens, suggested that Hamlet should be regarded as 'a young man whose intellects were in some degree impaired by his own misfortunes, by the death of his father, the loss of expected sovereignty, and a sense of shame, resulting from his mother's hasty marriage'—*The Plays of William Shakespeare*, 1785, vol. x, p. 521. Henry Mackenzie thought that 'the distraction of Hamlet is clearly affected through the whole play, always subject to the control of his reason, and subservient to the accomplishment of his designs'—*The Mirror*, No. 100, 22d April 1780.

John Ferriar, M.D., Manchester, in describing latent lunacy, suggests that 'the character of Hamlet can only be understood on this principle. He feigns madness for political purposes, while the poet means to represent his understanding as really (and unconsciously to himself) unhinged by the cruel circumstances in which he is placed. . . . His real insanity is only developed after the mock-play. Then, in place of a systematic conduct conducive to his purposes, he becomes irresolute, inconsequent; and the plot appears to stand unaccountably still. Instead of striking at his object, he resigns himself to the current of events, and sinks at length ignobly under the stream'—*An Essay towards a Theory of Apparitions*, 1813, p. 114. Dr Drake considers that Hamlet 'personates insanity with a skill which indicates the highest order of genius and imposes on all but the king, whose conscience, perpetually on the watch, soon enables him to detect the inconsistencies of his nephew'—*Shakespeare and his Times*, vol. ii, p. 396, 1817.

An able writer under the signature of T. C. (which probably means Thomas Campbell), in *Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1818, pursues the question thus: 'It has been much canvassed by critics whether Hamlet's madness were altogether feigned or in some degree real. Most certain it is that his whole perfect being had received a shock that had unsettled his faculties. That there

was disorder in his soul, none can doubt—that is, a shaking and unsettling of its powers from their due sources of action. But who can believe for a moment that there was in his mind the least degree of that which, with psychological meaning, we call disease? Such a supposition would at once destroy that intellectual sovereignty in his being which, in our eyes, constitutes his exaltation. Shakespeare never could intend that we should be allowed to feel pity for a mind to which we were meant to bow, nor does it seem to be consistent with the nature of his own imagination to have subjected one of his most ideal beings to such mournful mental infirmity. That the limits of disorder are not easily distinguishable in the representation is certain. How should they? The limits of disorder in reality lie in the mysterious and inscrutable depths of nature. Neither surely could it be intended by Shakespeare that Hamlet should for a moment cease to be a moral agent, as he must then have been. Look at him upon all great occasions, where, had there been madness in his mind, it would have been most remarkable; look on him in his mother's closet, or listen to his dying words, and then ask if there was any disease of madness in his soul'—p. 509. To a republication of this article in his *Memorials of Shakespeare*, 1828, Dr N. Drake added the following note: 'It is impossible for a moment to conceive that Shakespeare ever intended to represent the mental faculties of Hamlet, though powerfully and deeply influenced by the circumstances around him, and simulating madness for purposes of personal safety and effective retribution, as under any degree of morbid derangement; all moral responsibility and intellectual greatness of character would vanish on such a supposition'—p. 400.

In the same year (1828) there appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* a paper by Hartley Coleridge, published in his *Essays and Marginalia*, 1851, in which this topic is thus touched: 'If it be asked, Is Hamlet really mad? or for what purpose does he assume madness? we reply, that he assumes madness to conceal from himself and others his real distemper. Mad he certainly is not in the sense that Lear and Ophelia are mad. Neither his sensitive organs nor the operations of his will are impaired. His mind is lord over itself, but it is not master of his will. The ebb and flow of his feelings are no longer obedient to calculable impulses; . . . his actions and practical conclusions are not consistent with the premises in his mind and senses. An overwhelming motive produces inertness—he is blinded with excess of light'—p. 162. This subject is further pursued in some *Observations on the Laws of Mortality and Disease*, by George Farren, 1829; an *Essay on Popular and Classical Illustrations of Insanity*, by Sir Henry Halford, read in 1829 and published in 1833. In a critique on *The Essays and Orations of Sir Henry Halford*, in the *Quarterly Review*, some valuable observations on this theme occur, as well as in an article contributed to *Fraser's Magazine* in 1836, and reissued in the *Shakespeare Papers* of Dr Maginn, 1860. Another writer in *Blackwood's*

*Magazine*, in treating of The Feigned Madness of Hamlet, says: 'The mimicry of madness was but the excess of that levity and wildness which naturally sprang from his impatient and overwrought spirit. It afforded some scope to these disquieted feelings which it served to conceal. The feint of madness covered all, even the sarcasm and disgust and turbulence, which it freed in some measure from an intolerable restraint. Nor was it a disguise ungrateful to a moody spirit, grown careless of the respect of men, and indifferent to all the ordinary projects and desires of life. The masquerade brought with it no sense of humiliation—it pleased a misanthropic humour—it gave him shelter and a sort of escape from society, and it cost him little effort. That mingled bitterness and levity, which served for the representation of insanity, was often the most faithful expression of his feelings'—October 1839, p. 452. Charles Knight, in his *Shakespeare*, 1841, concludes that 'Shakespeare did not, either in his first sketch or his amended copy, intend his audience to believe that Hamlet was essentially mad'—'Introductory Notice to Hamlet.' About (as nearly as we can discover) 1844, Professor Henry Reed, of Pennsylvania, in *Two Lectures on Tragic Poetry*, republished in his *English History and Tragic Poetry, Illustrated by Shakespeare*, 1856, expressed the opinion 'that, from combinative influences, the mind of Hamlet was in a state of undue susceptibility of both unnatural excitement and depression; and though further agitated by a supernatural visitation, by which, in his own words, he felt his "disposition horribly shaken with thoughts beyond the reaches of our soul." . . . He became conscious that the sovereignty of his reason was in jeopardy, and it is that very consciousness—the apprehension of insanity—which suggests to an intellect so active the thought of feigning madness—the desire of assuming an outer disposition which would give the spiritual elements of his nature an unwonted freedom, and which might always be controlled by his intellectual strength'—p. 253.

In 1846, the late Charles Cowden Clarke, in his interesting lectures on *Shakespeare Characters*, published 1863, found it advisable to state this question for discussion: 'The readers of this most mysterious of all the characters in Shakespeare are divided into those who believe in his real insanity, occasioned by that woful accumulation of circumstances—the revealing of his father's spirit, the promulgation of his murder, and the tremendous responsibility arising out of it to avenge his violent and unnatural death—while the other party hold the opinion that the poet intended to convey nothing more than the assumed madness of the prince, for the purpose of shrouding his course of retribution;' and enforces his conviction 'that this latter is the true reading of the character,' thus: 'In all his soliloquies he never utters an incoherent phrase. When he is alone, he reasons clearly and consistently, it may be inconclusively, because he seeks in sophism an excuse for deferring the task of revenge imposed upon him; but it is always coherently.' . . . 'In the scenes, too, with his heart-friend Horatio, Hamlet is uni-

formly rational, with one exception only, and that is immediately after the play scene, and the discovery of the king's appalled conscience, when the wild words he utters may be fairly imputed to the result of his excitement, consequent upon the confirmation of the Ghost's murder-tale. With the players, too, and the gravedigger, where it is unnecessary to maintain the consistency of the part he had assumed, he is perfectly collected and even utters sound criticism and profound philosophy. His apology to Laertes, wherein he decidedly imputes his former misconduct to mental aberration, is the nearest approach to a confirmation of the idea that he has been really insane; but this scene takes place in the presence of the whole court, whom he has all along intended to deceive, his revenge, moreover, being still left unaccomplished'—pp. 67-72. The late George Dawson's opinion was, that 'in the common acceptation of the word, Hamlet was not mad, but he was near to it; and he sometimes even was so overcome that he passed across the fine line where sanity trembled into a form of madness'—*Lecture on Hamlet*, 1850.

A different opinion was expressed in 1856 by W. Watkiss Lloyd, in a series of *Essays on the Life and Plays of Shakespeare*, contributed to the second edition of S. W. Singer's *Shakespeare*, of which fifty copies were separately printed in 1858 without pagination. On the first page of letter K of this reprint we read: 'Hamlet's mind is certainly unhinged, and I would prefer to say unsettled. He is two entirely different Hamlets in different scenes, and we see him in constant alternations of hurried and placid intervals. If we could assume for a moment that his madness is entirely feigned, we should stumble over the inconsistency that it is so carried out as to answer no reasonable purpose, excites suspicion instead of diverting it, covers not, and is not fitted to cover, any secondary design; and would amount at best to a weak and childish escapade of ill-humour and spleen.' This opinion that Hamlet's 'intellects were really impaired by the circumstances in which he was placed,' which Joseph Ritson, in his *Remarks, Critical and Illustrative, on the Text and Notes of Shakespeare*, 1783, thought 'very probable,' has of late acquired fresh interest. 'The doctors of the insane have been,' as Professor Edward Dowden, in *Shakespeare's Mind and Art*, p. 160, says, 'studiers of the state of Hamlet's mind—Drs Ray, Kellogg, Conolly, Maudsley, Bucknill [&c.];' but they find it harder than Polonius did to hit upon a definition of madness:

‘For, to define true madness,  
What is it but—to be nothing else than mad.’

The first-named, Dr Ray, tells us, in his *Mental Pathology*, 1873, though in a paper, reprinted from *The American Journal of Insanity*, April 1847, that 'Hamlet's mental condition furnishes in advance the characteristic symptoms of insanity in wonderful harmony and consistency' (p. 506); and he thinks that 'on the supposi-

tion of his real insanity we have a satisfactory explanation of the difficulties which have received such various solutions. The integrity of every turn of reason[ing] is marred by some intrusion of disease; the smooth, deep current of his feelings is turned into eddies and whirlpools under its influence, and his most solemn undertakings conducted to an abortive issue'—p. 509. Dr Kellogg, in *Shakespeare's Delineations of Insanity, &c.*, 1866, maintains that 'Shakespeare . . . recognised what none of his critics, not conversant with medical psychology in its present advanced state, seem to have any conception of—namely, that there are cases of melancholic madness of a deliberate shade, in which the reasoning faculties, the intellect proper, so far from being overcome, or even disordered, may, on the other hand, be rendered more active and vigorous, while the will, the moral feelings, the sentiments, and affections, are the faculties which seem alone to suffer from the stroke of disease. Such a case he has given us in the character of Hamlet, with a fidelity to nature which continues more and more to excite our wonder and astonishment as our knowledge of this intricate subject increases'—p. 36. Dr Conolly, who had been a practitioner of medicine in Stratford-on-Avon, in his *Study of Hamlet*, 1863, affirms that 'Hamlet's mental constitution, and the already existing disturbance in his feelings' indicate 'a predisposition to actual madness,' and says: 'It certainly appears to me that the intention to feign was soon forgotten, or could not steadily be maintained, in consequence of a real mental infirmity; that it subsequently recurred to Hamlet's thoughts only in circumstances not productive of much emotion; but became quite unthought of in every scene in which his feelings were strongly acted upon, and that in such scenes a real and lamentable mental disorder swept all trivial considerations away'—p. 53. Dr Maudsley lays down this principle, that 'if any one in the full possession of his reasoning powers refuse to accept the delusions of life, and persists in exposing the realities beneath appearances, he is so much out of harmony with his surroundings that he will to a certainty be counted more or less insane. Strange, too, as it may seem, it is nevertheless true that such an one will commonly feign to be more eccentric or extravagant than he really is'—p. 140. 'The deliberate feigning of insanity was an act in strict conformity with Hamlet's character; he was by nature something of a dissimulator, that feeling having been born in him'—p. 143. 'It is in Hamlet's inherited disposition to dissimulation that we find the only explanation of his deliberately feigning madness, when, to all appearances, policy would have been much better served if he had not so feigned'—p. 144, *Mind and Body*, 1875. In his *Madfolk of Shakespeare*, Dr Bucknill points out that 'Hamlet is not slow to confess his melancholy, and indeed it is the peculiarity of this mental state that those suffering from it seldom or never attempt to conceal it. A man will conceal his delusions, will deny and veil the excitement of mania; but the melancholiac is almost always readily confidential on the subject of his feelings. In this he

resembles the hypochondriac, though not perhaps from the same motives. The hypochondriac seeks for sympathy and pity; the melancholiac frequently admits others to the sight of his mental wretchedness from mere despair of relief and contempt of pity'—p. 78. Although he arrives at 'the conviction that Hamlet is morbidly melancholic,' he does not wish to convey 'the erroneous impression that he is a veritable lunatic. He is a reasoning melancholiac, morbidly changed from his former state of thought, feeling, and conduct. . . . He is in a state which thousands pass through without becoming truly insane, but which in hundreds does pass into actual madness. It is the state of incubation of disease'—p. 127.

This subject the reader will find further discussed, if he desires to investigate the matter more fully, in *Essays on the Varieties in Mania in Hamlet, Lear, Ophelia, etc.*, by George Farren, 1833; *What Does Hamlet Mean?* by Thomas Wade, 1840; *An Essay on the Tragedy of Hamlet*, by P. Macdonell, 1843; *Shakespeare's Hamlet*, by Edmund Strachey, 1848; Bucknill's *Psychology*, 1859, and his *Medical Knowledge of Shakespeare*, 1860; *Shakespeare's Medical Knowledge*, C. W. Stearns, M.D., 1865; in pamphlets bearing the title, *Was Hamlet Mad?* by John Hernon, 1864; and by several authors, edited by R. H. Horne, 1871; W. Bryson Wood's *Hamlet, from a Psychological Point of View*, 1871; Tyler's *The Philosophy of Hamlet*, 1874; F. Marshall's *Study of Hamlet*, 1875; and in a collection of chronological extracts on the subject, contained in H. H. Furness' *Hamlet*, vol. ii, pp. 194-235. For ourselves, we consent to marvel with Cardinal Wiseman: 'How consummate must be the poet's art who can have so skilfully described, to the minutest symptoms, the mental malady of a great mind as to leave it uncertain to the present day, even among learned physicians versed in such maladies, whether Hamlet's madness was real or assumed'—*William Shakespeare*, 1865, p. 41. 'Of what other author of any time or place do we inquire into the character of fictitious persons in this manner as if they were real?'—Rev. Charles Bathurst's *Shakespeare's Versification*, p. 70.

#### HAD THE QUEEN ANY SHARE IN THE MURDER OF HER HUSBAND?

The idea involved in the *Observations on Hamlet*, being an attempt to prove that Shakespeare designed it as an indirect censure on Mary Queen of Scots, 1796, and in the three parts of the 'Appendix' to that work, issued in 1797, by James Plumptre, M.A., is, that the queen was an accessory to the murder of her husband, Hamlet's father. That subject, however, apart from its probable historical relation to Scottish history, has been brought up as a

distinct literary inquiry in an anonymous pamphlet, entitled *An Attempt to Ascertain Whether the Queen were an Accessory Before the Fact to the Murder of her First Husband*, 1856. This author argues for her innocence—(1) Hamlet's grief arises from his mother's *hasty* marriage; (2) the Ghost ascribes his death exclusively to Claudius, and expressly desires that Hamlet should do no hurt to his mother; (3) Claudius never treats her as if there had been this guilty secret between them; (4) nor does she at the play, like the king, take guilt to herself from the representation of the act; for had she been art and part in the murder, and retained her self-command under that suggestive scene, she must have been the strongest rather than the weakest character in the play; (5) when she recognised her own fickleness in the mirror of the play she did not feel personally stung by the words:

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'None wed the second but who killed the first'—III, ii, 296;

(6) the king, when he suspects she knows his crime, becomes less loving to her, and at last she unsuspectingly drinks of the poisoned cup he had mingled for her son.

It has been argued against this exculpatory attempt—(1) that, considering the suddenness of the death of her former husband, her haste to wed Claudius, and so become

'The imperial jointress to this warlike state'—I, ii, 9,

argues a likelihood, if not of actual consent, yet of guilty connivance on her part; (2) the Ghost is reticent on her participation, but yet asserts Claudius 'won' her; and he does not ask Hamlet to take revenge on her, but commands him to

'Leave her to Heaven,  
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,  
To prick and sting her'—I, v, 86-88;

(3) Hamlet endeavours to press the matter to her conscience by asking—'Madam, how like you this play?' (4) he actually charges her with the crime in these terms:

'A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,  
As kill a king and marry with his brother.'

*Queen.* As kill a king!  
*Hamlet.* Ay, lady! 'twas my word'—III, iv, 29-31;

and (5) she, in part, confesses, when she says:

'Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,  
And there I see such black and grained spots  
As will not leave their tinct'—III, iv, 90-92.

Besides, (7) Shakespeare's omission in subsequent editions of the two following lines of disclaimer by the queen, which appear in

the 1603 quarto, shows that he felt that her relation to the murder should be brought nearer and closer:

‘But as I have a soule, I sweare by heaven  
I never knew of this most horrible murder.’

If we give the queen the benefit of the doubt, we shall perhaps go as far as we can logically go by bringing in the convenient and sometimes perfectly legitimate verdict of ‘not proven.’ In the early form Shakespeare followed *The Hystorie of Hamblet*, in making her innocent; but it is evident that in the later forms she takes a lower moral position, though, as Hunter, in his *New Illustrations of Shakespeare*, vol. ii, p. 257, says, ‘her precise situation is not clearly exhibited.’

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#### ‘INHIBITION’ AND ‘INNOVATION’—(II, ii, 318, 319).

When Hamlet asks, regarding the players, ‘How chances it they travel?’ Rosencrantz replies, not very clearly to the general apprehension, ‘I think their *inhibition* comes by the means of the late innovation.’ Theobald at one time suggested that we should read *itineration* for *inhibition*, but did not subsequently hold to his emendation. Dr Johnson supposed that the true reading probably was, ‘I think their innovation’ [*i.e.*, their new practice of strolling] ‘comes by means of the late inhibition.’ J. P. Collier understands by the phrase that, as a matter of fact, ‘the players, by a “late innovation,” were *inhibited* or forbidden to act in or near the city, and therefore travelled or strolled into the country.’ The editors of the Clarendon Press *Hamlet* explain it thus: ‘If by “inhibition” Shakespeare merely meant, as we think most probable, that the actors were practically thrown out of employment, it seems also likely that by “innovation” he meant the authority granted to the Children [of the Queen’s Revels] to act at the regularly licensed theatres’—Preface, p. 14. Stevens resolves the difficulty by saying that ‘Rosencrantz means that their permission to act any longer at an established house is taken away, in consequence of the new custom of introducing personal abuse into their comedies. Several companies of actors in the time of Shakespeare were silenced on account of this licentious practice.’ Malone objects to this—(1) ‘Shakespeare could not mean to charge his friends, the *old tragedians*, with the *new* custom of introducing personal abuse; but rather must have meant that the old tragedians were *inhibited* from performing in the city, and obliged to travel on account of the misconduct of the younger company. And (2) he could not have directed his satire at these young men who played occasionally at his own theatre,’ and says, ‘I have no doubt therefore that the present dialogue was pointed at the choir boys of St Paul’s’—who

are thus referred to in *Jack Drum's Entertainment; or, Pasquil and Katherine*, 1601 :

' I sawe the children of Paules last night,  
And troth they pleased me pretty, pretty well.  
The apes, in time, will do it handsomely,

I like the audience that frequentheth there  
With much applause : a man shall not be choaked  
With the stench of garlic, nor be pasted  
To the barmy jacket of a brewer, etc.

The Rev. Joseph Hunter, in his *New Illustrations of Shakespeare*, vol. ii, p. 230, presents another view of the matter. '*Inhibition*', he says, 'appears to me, to be opposed to *residence*'. Their inhibition, their travelling, comes by means of the late innovation. What the innovation was is plainly intimated in the dialogue which follows; it was the appearance of children on the stage, who, for a time, drew away the public from the old performers. But that this was the innovation which produced this effect we learn more decidedly from the newly-discovered copy [of the quarto 1603]. There we read: "Y-faith novelty carries it away; for the principal public audience that come to them, are turned to private plays and the humours of children"—S. Timmins' *Hamlet*, 1603-4, p. 40. We have the most decisive evidence that the company to which Shakespeare belonged did occasionally leave London and travel, in the title-page of this quarto of 1603, in which the play is said to have been performed at Oxford, Cambridge, and other places. This scene was of the nature of an apology for their travelling, which was probably then, as it would be now (1845), thought beneath the dignity of a company of performers who were the Lord Chamberlain's servants.'

A good deal might be said in favour of each of the foregoing expositions of the enigma of Rosencrantz's reply, although all of them seem to fail in some way when they come to specialise the fact in theatricals referred to. Perhaps more attention has been paid to the passage as one that afforded some likelihood of attaining a trustworthy mark of the time of the production of the play than for the mere purpose of elucidating the text. We believe that to get the meaning of the text is the main requisite. If that is gained, any mark of time implied will be an interesting and certain inference from sound premises. With that aim we shall examine the passage with a little attention.

*Inhibition* is, we suppose, a law term signifying a restraining interdict or legal prohibition, an authoritative forbidding of an intent or practice.

*Innovation* means the change of an old fashion for a new custom, and, in law, the introduction of some fresh measure to accomplish a desired end. In this view the passage should imply that the enforcement on the actors of a legal hindrance to the exercising of their craft upon the stage had been brought about or effected by the introduction of some new law, or measure having the force of law,

which, as being new, was looked on as an infringement of the rights or privileges of those affected by it, and probably regarded also as unjustifiable and tyrannical by those exposed to its operation. J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps has brought to light a letter from the Lord Mayor of London to the Privy Council, 12th April 1580, in which the opinion is expressed 'that the players of playes which are used at the theatre and other such places, and tumblers and such like, are a very superfluous sort of men, and of such facultie as the laws have disallowed, and their exercise of these playes is a great hinderaunce of the service of God, who hath with His mighty hand so lately admonished us of oure earneste repentance.'\* The law referred to by the Lord Mayor by which players were 'disallowed,' was that of 14th Eliz. (1572), which forbade such persons not belonging to any baron of the realm, or towards any other honourable personage of greater degree, 'to wander abroad.' To evade this, various companies were enrolled in the service of the nobility, and in 1583 twelve of the best comedians and stage-players were chosen, and 'at the request of Sir Francis Walsingham, they were sworn the queen's servants, and were allowed wages and liveries as grooms of the chamber.' This royal patronage and protection of the drama did not, however, save it from censure and opposition. Complaints against players still continued to be poured forth, and the agitation for the suppression of the stage was eagerly kept up. One example of the form this opposition took is sufficiently interesting to merit quotation. It is contained in a letter from a zealous Protestant soldier, which was addressed to Sir Francis Walsingham (the queen's adviser to take the players into her service). It supplies a notice of the popularity of the drama and the intensity of the feeling entertained against it at that time. The date of it is 25th January 1586-7, and it runs as follows:

'The daily abuse of stage-plays is such an offence to the godly and so great a hinderance to the gospell as the Papistes doe exceedingly rejoyce at the blemyshe thereof, and not without cause, for evereye daye in the weeke the playeres billes are sett upp in sondry places of the cittie, some in the name of her Majesties menne, some the Erle of Leic[esters], some the Erle of Oxfordes, the Lord Admyralles, and divers others, so that when the belles tolle to the lectoures the trumpets sound to the stages, whearat the wicked faction of Rome lawghethe for joy while the godlye weape for sorrowe. Woe is me! the play-howses are pestered when the churches are naked. Att the one it is not possible to gett a place; at the other voyde seats are plentie. The profaning of the Sabbath is redressed, but as bolde a custume entartayned, and yet still our longe-suffering God forbayrith to punishe. Yt is a woeful sight to see two hundrede proude players jett in their silkes, wheare five hundred pore people sterve in the streetes; but yf needes this mischiefe must be tollerated, whearat, no doubt, the Highest frownith,

\* *Illustrations of the Life of Shakespeare*, part i, p. 19.

yett for Gode's sake, sir, lett every stage in London pay a weekeley portion to the pore, that *ex hoc malo, proveniat aliquid bonum* (out of this evil, something good may come); but yt weare rather to be wissched that playes might be used as Appollo did his lawghinges, *semel in anno* (once in the year).

'In 1589 Lord Burleigh appears to have directed the Lord Mayor to silence the players of the Lord Admiral's and Lord Strange's companies for introducing matters of state and religion upon the stage.' 'In this year also proposals were made to appoint two commissioners to act with the Master of the Revels for the purpose of examining and licensing every play, and so restraining the abuses of the actors.' On 13th September 1595, the Lord Mayor complained to the Privy Council that 'among other inconveyncies,' 'the refuse sort of evill-disposed and ungodly people,' 'frequent the playes as ther manner is, that ar daily shewed at the Theator and Banckside, whereof will follow the same inconveyncies, whearof we have had to[o] much experience heartofore for preventing, whearof we ar humble suters to your lordship and the rest to direct your letters to the justices of peac of Surrey and Middlesex for the present stay and final suppressing of the said playes, as well at the Theator and Bankside as in all other places about the cytie.' An order of the Privy Council, dated 28th July 1597, was issued to the justices of the shire of Middlesex, in her Majesty's name 'to chardge and commaund them to take present order there be no more plaiers used in any public place within thre miles of the citie until Allhalowtide next,' and to see 'the Curtaine Theatre or anie other common playhouse' so destroyed that it could 'not be imployed agayne to suche use.' The Lord Mayor's opposition must have been successful, at least for a time. In a petition presented to the Privy Council by the inhabitants of Blackfriars, November 1596, against the building of a theatre there by 'one Burbadge,' it is stated 'that now all players being banished by the Lord Mayor from playing within the citie by reason of the great inconveniencies and ill rule that followeth them, they now think to plant themselves in liberties,' and they therefore pray their honours 'that no playhouse may be used or kept there. Again, in a volume of epigrams and satires, by Edward Guilpin, entitled *Skialethia; or, a Shadow of Truth*, published in 1598, the author says:

\* See yonder  
One, like the unfrequented theater,  
Walkes, in darke silence and vast solitude.

Thereafter, too, we find that the players built all their regular theatres in the suburbs of the city beyond the limits of the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor and the corporation, who were for the most part violently opposed to theatricals during the reigns of Elizabeth and James.

A further order was made for the restraint of the immoderate use of playhouses 22d June 1600, and another was issued 31st December

1601.\* The former of these provided (1) 'that their shall be aboute the cittie two houses and no more allowed to serve for the use of the common stage-playes,' viz., the Bankside and the Globe; (2) 'that the two severall compaines of players assigned unto the two houses allowed may play each of them in their severel house twice a weeke and no oftener,' and shall not play on Sabbath or in Lent time; and (3) that the Lord Mayor and justices shall commit 'to prison any owners of playhouses and players as shall disobey and resists these orders;' and the latter repeated these orders with greater emphasis and stricter penalties.

In view of these quotations in theatrical history we think it is very evident that Shakespeare had quite a sufficient groundwork of fact on which to base his imaginary 'travel' of the players. He required to introduce a play into his tragedy; to accomplish this he must bring the players to the court, and he had to account for their arrival. He could not well have court theatricals performed by court players, for then the king would have been hardened by play-seeing, and the actors would have been the servants of the king, not of Hamlet. How such a suitable accident came about it was advisable to explain. Shakespeare explained it by taking a reason, the likelihood and possibility of which his audience was prepared to admit from what they knew of the condition of actors in their own land and day. The passage does not perhaps involve a reference to any special fact in the theatrical history of Shakespeare's own times; but is employed to give greater verisimilitude to his plot, and naturalness to the processes by means of which he effected his ends as a dramatic author.

#### AN EARLY NOTICE OF HAMLET'S SOLILOQUY 'TO BE OR NOT TO BE.'

In 1591 there appeared '*Syr P[hilip] S[idney] His Astrophel and Stella, . . .* At London. Printed for Thomas Newman.' To this work Thomas Nash prefixed an introductory epistle containing some caustic 'satire nice and critical,' headed 'Somewhat to read for them who list.' In the same year a second edition of the same work was produced by the same printer; but in this Nash's censorious criticism was suppressed. Taking into consideration Nash's early enmity to Shakespeare, and his allusion to his *Hamlet* in the prefatory letter to Greene's *Menaphon*, we can scarcely doubt that there is in this introduction a continuation of the same splenitive attack, for therein we read: 'My style is somewhat heavy-gated, and cannot dance, and trip, and goe so lively with "Oh my love, ah my love, all my love's gone," as other shepherds that have been fools in the Morris, time out of mind; nor hath my prose any

\* See the text of these orders in J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps's *Illustrations of the Life of Shakespeare*, part i, appendix, pp. 106-108, and 117, 118.

skill to imitate the almond-leaf verse, or sit taboring five years together nothing but "To be, to be" on a paper drum.\* 'A paper drum' was a slang word for dramatic poetry. The song-burden noticed is exactly that of Ophelia's grief-maddened strains, and the reference to the most celebrated soliloquy in this play is nearly as close as may be. If we were to count back 'five years' from the writing of this letter, *Hamlet* would bear the date, in its earlier form, of 1585 or 1586. In reference to this inferential date we may here note that in his recently published *Papers on Shakespeare*, p. 3, Robert Cartwright, M.D., expresses the opinion that the tragedy of *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, was 'most probably written immediately after the death of Sir Philip Sidney,' after the battle of Zutphen in October 1586, and brought out on the stage at Christmas, or at latest by March 1586-7. 'The duration of the play,' he thinks, 'from the death of old Hamlet to the final scene occupies a period of full five months' (on this subject see also the same author's *Footsteps of Shakespeare*, pp. 42, 43); 'and it is a singular coincidence that Sir Henry Sidney died on 5th May, and Sir Philip Sidney on 17th October 1586, just five months and twelve days intervening' between them.

#### TWO IMPROVED ACTING 'HAMLETS.'

In 1771, an amendment of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, by David Garrick, was put upon the stage at Drury Lane, but it has never been printed. For the following account of this acting edition we are indebted to the *Dramatic Miscellanies of Thomas Davies*: The first act, which, in my opinion, the author's genius carries on with wonderful rapidity, he (Garrick) had observed was immoderately long; for this reason he divided it into two, the first ending with Hamlet's determined resolution to watch with Horatio and Marcellus in expectation of seeing the ghost of his father. In consequence of this arrangement, the old third act was extended to the fourth. Little or no change in language or scenery was attempted, till the fifth act, in which Laertes arrives, and Ophelia is distracted, as in the old play. The plotting scenes between the king and Laertes to destroy Hamlet were entirely changed, and the character of Laertes rendered more estimable. Hamlet, having escaped from Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, returns with a firm resolution to avenge the death of his father. The gravediggers were thrown absolutely out of the play. The audience were not informed of the fate of Ophelia, and the queen, instead of being poisoned on the stage, was led from her seat and said to be in a state of insanity owing to her sense of guilt. When Hamlet attacks the king, the latter draws his sword and defends himself, and is killed

\* Quoted in the Shakespeare Society's reprint (1842) of Nash's *Pierce Penniless*, introduction, p. xxv.

in the renounter. Laertes and Hamlet die of their mutual wounds.\* To such material changes in this favourite tragedy the audience submitted during the life of the alterer, but they did not approve what they barely endured. The scenes and characters of Shakespeare, with all their blemishes, will not bear radical or violent alteration. The author had drawn Claudius a coward, as well as a villain and usurper; and this strong check upon guilt, and stigma upon wickedness, ought by no means to be removed. Garrick, if I remember right, used to say, that before his alteration of Hamlet the king used to be stuck like a pig on the stage; but by giving the murderer courage this great actor did not see that he lessened the meanness of his character, which the author takes care to inculcate throughout the play. The brave villain, like Richard III, we justly hate, but we cannot despise him. Why the fate of Ophelia should be left uncertain, as well as that of the queen, I cannot conceive. But the spectators of Hamlet would not part with their old friends the gravediggers. The people called for Hamlet as it had been acted from time immemorial'—vol. iii, pp. 151-153.

Among the many adventurous doings in literature undertaken by Alexandre Dumas was the production of an improved *Hamlet*. On 15th December 1847 this Parisianised *Hamlet* was put on the stage of the Théâtre Historique. The original has been pretty freely manipulated. Osric, the 'waterfly,' is entirely omitted; several scenes are excised, some new ones are introduced, and the sequence of others is altered. Laertes does not go to France, Hamlet is not sent to England, the Norwegian framework is taken away. Shakespeare had inartistically, it seems, terminated his noble tra-

\* In the *Life of Philip James Kemble*, by James Boaden, 1825, it is stated that this play, which was not, like a large number of Garrick's alterations, printed in *Garrick's Dramatic Works*, was in the possession of Garrick's great successor. That work contains the following fuller and somewhat different account of these alterations: Garrick 'cut out the voyage to England and the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who had made love to the employment and marshalled their way by knavery. He omitted the funeral of Ophelia and all the wisdom of the prince and the rude jocularity of the gravediggers. Hamlet bursts in upon the king and his court, and Laertes reproaches him with his father's and his sister's deaths. The exasperation of both is at its height when the king interposes; he had commanded Hamlet to depart for England, and declares that he will no longer bear this rebellious conduct, but that his wrath shall at length fall heavy on the prince. "First," exclaims Hamlet, "feel you mine," and he instantly stabs him. The queen rushes out, imploring the attendants to save her from her son. Laertes, seeing treason and murder before him, attacks Hamlet to revenge his father, his sister, and his king. He wounds Hamlet mortally, and Horatio is on the point of making Laertes accompany him to the shades, when the prince commands him to desist, assuring him that it was the hand of Heaven which administered by Laertes "that precious balm for all his wounds." We then learn that the miserable mother had dropped in a trance before she could reach her chamber door, and Hamlet implores for her "an hour of penitence ere madness ends her." He then joins the hands of Laertes and Horatio, and recommends them to unite their virtues (like a coalition of ministers) "to calm the troubled land." The old couplet as to the bodies concludes the play'—vol. i, p. 110.

gedy with the death of the Prince of Denmark. This the author of *Monte Cristo* saw was a mistake. He therefore makes him live. As a curiosity in Shakespearian emendation, it is perhaps worth making known and preserving Dumas' continuation of *Hamlet*, transcribed into an English version. After the fencing match, in which Hamlet is not once 'hit,' when Laertes is mortally wounded, and the queen has drunk from the poisoned chalice, in the midst of the general consternation which prevails among the courtiers, 'the majesty of buried Denmark' appears upon the scene.

**HAMLET, the KING, GERTRUDE, LAERTES, and Courtiers.**

*Enter the Ghost.*

*Hamlet.* My father's spirit ! Ha ! dark shadow ! Come  
To see thy murderer perish. [He stabs the KING.  
*King.* Help ! help !

*The Courtiers appear preparing to aid the KING.*

*Hamlet.* Stand off ! He who advances but one step  
Shall never move again ! Am I not king ?  
Withdraw. This dreadful tragedy must close  
Before our eyes alone. Pack off, I say ! [Courtiers retire in terror.  
Look there, ye who remain, what see ye there ?

*Laertes.* Oh, heavens ! the buried king.

*King.* My brother !

*Gertrude.* My husband !!

*Laertes.* O pardon me !

*Ghost.* I shall, Laertes : thy youth

And thy hot blood have led thee into crime.  
But thou art punished for't. Lift up thine eyes  
To Him, Laertes, who, enthroned on high,  
Deep fathoms every heart. Thou shalt find heaven  
More merciful than earth, Laertes : now,

Pray and expire.

[LAERTES dies.]

*Gertrude.* Oh, pity ! pity !

*Ghost.* Ay !  
Thy crime was in the love, poor feeble woman,  
Implanted in thy nature. But from heaven  
A Saviour's heart looks down with love benign  
On all who love on earth. Hope, Gertrude, hope.  
For thy heart's tears have washed its shame away.

Hope and depart.

[GERTRUDE dies.]

*King.* Forgiveness !

*Ghost.* Burning hell,

And all its furies, vile, unnatural slave.  
Possess no torments meet for crimes like thine.—  
Die, miscreant, murderer, base, incestuous wretch !  
Die in despair.

[KING dies.]

*Hamlet.* And I ? must I remain,  
Sad orphan, still to tread earth's stage ?  
Must I still breathe this air of wretchedness—  
Tragedian chosen by the wrath of heaven ?  
If I have been unequal to my 'cast,'  
And sunk beneath a 'part' too mighty for me—  
If, thro' my weakness, I have sacrificed  
Four victims when thou but demandedst one,  
Is there no hope of pardon.—Father, say  
What punishment awaits me ?

*Ghost.* Live !

[The curtain falls]

## QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

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### A C T I.

Who was Hamlet? Give a sketch of his early life.

What events had led to the accession of Claudius?

What were then the political relations of Denmark to Norway?

Describe the circumstances in which the play opens.

Give an outline of the geography of Denmark, and describe Elsinore.

What singular event happened on the platform of Elsinore Castle?

Who were spectators of it? What effect had it on them?

To whom did they communicate the news?

What did he resolve to do on hearing of it?

What happened when he visited the platform?

Give an abstract of the information he received.

How did he act when these strange tidings were made known?

Describe the family of Polonius, and tell the relation in which its members stood to Hamlet, the king, and the queen.

What cause of grief had been felt by Hamlet before he received the Ghost's revelation, and what enhanced that grief?

Describe Horatio; how did he stand related to Hamlet?

Give an estimate of the character of Hamlet's father.

Quote any 'good advice' given by Polonius.

Quote any phrases of Act I which have become proverbial.

Quote a notice of Christmas from Act I.

Explain 'a piece of him,' 'harrowes,' 'usurp'st,' 'carriage,' 'sharked,' 'romage,' 'moist star,' 'takes,' 'dole,' 'bedrid,' 'obsequies,' 'beaver,' 'grizzled,' 'cautel,' 'virtue,' 'chariest,' 'buttons,' 'blastments,' 'tender,' 'upspring,' 'cerements,' 'blazon,' 'secure,' 'posset,' 'pioneer,' 'antic,' 'friending.'

What is meant by 'rivals,' 'fantasy,' 'parle,' 'jump' or 'just,' 'impress,' 'stomach,' 'climatures,' 'kin' and 'kind,' 'between,' 'dearest,' 'primy,' 'suppliance,' 'temple,' 'credent,' 'wassail,' 'hebenon,' 'matin'?

What explanations have been suggested of 'sledded Polacks,' 'change that name,' 'mind's eye,' 'springes to catch woodcocks,' 'swinish,' 'discourse of reason,' 'sovereignty of reason,' 'eager,' 'truepenny'?

Give reasons for the references to 'St Patrick,' 'Nemean lion,' 'Lethie,' 'Hyperion to a satyr,' 'canker.'

Against indulgence in what vice does Hamlet inveigh?

Quote passages from (1) *Julius Cæsar*, and (2) *King Lear*, in which Shakespeare has expanded and improved passages in *Hamlet*, Act I.

Quote three (1) classical, (2) scriptural, and (3) proverbial allusions from Act I.

What is the position of the royal family in Denmark at the close of Act I?

Quote (1) five various readings, (2) five fine poetical passages, occurring in Act I.

## A C T I I L

What had occurred to Laertes since his setting out?

How had Ophelia obeyed the commands of Polonius concerning 'my Lord Hamlet?' and with what results?

What inference did Polonius draw from her information, and what did he resolve on doing?

What means had Queen Gertrude taken to discover the true causes of her son's melancholy?

What message did the ambassadors to Norway bring to Denmark?

What news did Polonius bring to the king and queen about Hamlet?

To what arrangement did the king and his minister come to verify the supposition of Polonius?

How was it carried out, and with what results?

What welcome tidings did Rosencrantz and Guildenstern bring to Prince Hamlet?

How was the 'travel' of the players accounted for?

What was Shakespeare supposed to refer to in this statement?

Did his interview with his old schoolfellows result in their discovering the secret they sought to find out?

How did Hamlet receive the players? How did he instruct Polonius to use them?

What self-accusings did the player's recitations lead him to make?

In carrying out what purpose did Hamlet resolve to employ them?

What play did Hamlet choose for performance at court?

How did he propose to make it more effective?

What is meant by 'keep,' 'fetch of warrant,' 'windlasses,' 'assays,' 'bias,' 'down-gyved,' 'gentry,' 'prescripts,' 'paragon,' 'coted,' 'escoted'?

Quote instances of the use of 'beautified' by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. What interpretation has been put upon the use of 'a vile phrase' here?

Explain 'tickle o' the sere,' 'too dear a half-penny,' 'inhibition,' 'innovation,' 'aery,' 'eyases,' 'comply,' 'chopine,' 'caviare,' 'lenton entertainment,' 'the law of writ and the liberty,' 'mobled.'

Who is the 'satirical rogue' from whom Hamlet quotes ?

What use does Shakespeare make of 'Aeneas' tale to Dido ?

Quote (1) five classical allusions; (2) three scriptural references; (3) five proverbial phrases; (4) five humorous sayings; and (5) five beautiful phrases or sentences, from Act II.

Had Hamlet any grounds for thinking

‘The play’s the thing  
Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the king’—II, ii, 581†

Did Rosencrantz and Guildenstern act honestly towards Hamlet ?

Do the moral precepts of Polonius to his son in Act I, and the directions given to Reynaldo in Act II, increase or decrease our esteem for the old statesman ?

### A C T III.

Did Rosencrantz and Guildenstern give an honest account of their interview with Hamlet ?

How did Polonius' plan of proving Hamlet's madness succeed ?

What part did Ophelia take in it ?

What serious thoughts were then pressing on Hamlet's mind ?

Describe the interview between Hamlet and Ophelia.

What were the reflections of Ophelia at its close ?

Did the king think Polonius had proved his point ?

On what plan did the king resolve ?

Sketch from Hamlet's speech to the player the chief faults of acting in Shakespeare's age, and show how he desired to improve the drama.

How did Hamlet expect, by the play, to bring conviction of guilt home to the king ?

How did Hamlet receive the company at the court play ?

How did the play proceed ? How were the audience affected by it ?

What words of Hamlet touched the king to the quick ?

How did Hamlet express his sense of the success of his plan ?

How were the king and queen affected by the play ?

What means did they use to inform him of their dissatisfaction ?

How did Hamlet rebuke his false friends ?

How did Hamlet receive Polonius ?

What resolve did Hamlet form regarding his mother ?

How did he feel affected towards the king ?

What commission did the king entrust to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern ? Did they accept of it willingly ?

How did the king fail in his repentance and prayers ?

Why did Hamlet 'miss' his revenge ?

How did Hamlet's interview with his mother commence ?

What scheme did his mother connive at ?

In what evil did this 'scheming' result ?

In what position did this place Hamlet ?

How did the conference of mother and son proceed ?

What occurred to interrupt it ?

How did this affect Hamlet ?—and the queen ?

How did the conversation end ?

What had Hamlet heard concerning the king's designs ?

Explain 'espials,' 'coil,' 'fardels,' 'the hatch and the disclose,' 'out-herods Herod,' 'coped,' 'stithy,' 'idle,' 'a suit of sables,' 'miching mallecho,' 'audit,' 'hent,' 'rood,' 'livery.'

Quote (1) three scriptural references ; (2) five classical allusions ; (3) five 'familiar quotations' ; (4) five fine passages, from Act III.

Give a clear statement of the condition of things in the palace at Elsinore at the close of Act III.

Explain three 'allusions' in Act III.

#### A C T I V.

Describe the conversation between Claudius and Gertrude after the death of Polonius.

In what form did the king put his proposal to send Hamlet to England before the queen ?

What were Rosencrantz and Guildenstern requested by the king to do about the body of Polonius ? How did they proceed and succeed ?

How did the interview between Hamlet and the king go on ?

Had it the effect of inducing the king to alter his plans ?

How had the Norwegian and the Polish sovereigns arranged their dispute ?

In what condition were the forces of the rivals at this juncture ?

What influence had the progress of young Fortinbras on Hamlet ?

To what resolution did he come on hearing the captain's statement ?

What had happened to Ophelia in consequence of her father's death ? How was her condition described ?

In what way did the manner of it complicate her misery ?

Describe the scene of her meeting with the king and queen.

How does the king sum up the sadness of her state ; and what political difficulties had arisen from the death of Polonius ?

What attitude did Laertes assume to the king and the state ?

Give an account of the conference between the king and Laertes.

State in his own words the grounds for offence he had.

How did Ophelia act when she re-entered the king's apartment ; and what impression did this make on Laertes ?

Quote some of the songs Ophelia sung, and explain how they show her sense of what had happened.

Explain the significance of her distribution of flowers.

Point out evidences of method in her madness.

How did the king endeavour to comfort Laertes ?

How had affairs gone with Hamlet since he had set out to England ? To whom did he send a message ?

Into what arrangement did Laertes and the king enter ?

On what did the king flatter Laertes ?

What news did the queen bring to the king and Laertes ?

Describe Ophelia's death.

What were the reflections of Laertes concerning it ?

Quote (1) three passages against murder; (2) four classical allusions; (3) five references to Scripture; (4) five fine passages, from Act IV.

Explain 'mineral,' 'diameter,' 'imposthume,' 'fust,' 'hugger-mugger,' 'Switzers,' 'overpeering,' 'hatchment,' 'character,' 'scrimers,' 'plurisy,' 'sliver.'

What was the floral significance of Ophelia's dying garland ?

What explanation has been given of Lamond ?

How did Laertes characterise him ?

#### A C T V.

What question had arisen regarding the manner of Ophelia's death ?  
How had it been settled ?

What preparations had been made for her funeral ?

Quote two of the conundrums of the gravediggers.

Quote three humorous passages from their colloquies.

With what poem had the gravedigger got acquainted ?

Who was its author ?

What mistaken phraseology does the gravedigger make use of ?

How does he state the question of suicide *versus* accident ?

On which side did he feel inclined to give his verdict ?

What was going on in the graveyard when Hamlet and Horatio entered it ?

What induced Hamlet to speak ?

To what reflections did what he saw give rise ?

Quote Hamlet's reflections on a lawyer's skull.

Give an abstract of Hamlet's war of wit with the gravedigger.

What references did the latter make to Hamlet ?

What did Hamlet say of Yorick ? What did the gravedigger say ?

Regarding which two renowned warriors did Hamlet moralise ?

After this what occurred in the graveyard ?

In what manner was Ophelia buried ? why so ?

Who objected to these 'maimed rites ?'

How did Hamlet learn who was being interred ?

What inferences have been drawn from Hamlet's ejaculation—'the fair Ophelia ?'

What reference did the queen make to her son ?

What did Laertes say of Hamlet then ?

What occurred between the two thereafter ?

How does Hamlet express himself concerning Ophelia ?

How does this grave-scene end ?

Describe the encounter of Hamlet with the pirates.

How did Hamlet discover the treacherous intent of the king ?

How did Hamlet secure the punishment of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern?

Why did Hamlet think his revenge must now be speedily taken?

How was the conversation between Hamlet and Horatio interrupted?

What was Osric? and what his message?

How did Hamlet receive it?

What contest of ceremony occurred between them?

What were the *real* conditions of the wager?

Did Hamlet accept the challenge given?

With what feelings did he do so?

What agreement had been come to between the king and Laertes?

Did Laertes keep to his agreement?

How did Laertes and Hamlet meet?

How did the king act during the duel? How did the queen act?

Describe the process of the combat.

What suddenly interrupted the affray?

What assertion did the queen make? How did Hamlet act?

What confession did Laertes make? How did he die?

How did the courtiers act?

What did Horatio propose to do? How was his purpose changed?

How did Hamlet die? Whom did he proclaim successor?

How does the play close?

What objection has been taken to the closing scene?

Explain 'straight,' 'even Christian,' 'mazard,' 'loggats,' 'imperious,' 'shreds,' 'crantz,' 'peace-parted,' 'splenitive,' 'push,' 'bugs,' 'statists,' 'yeoman's service,' 'comma,' 'card or calendar of gentry,' 'union,' 'pearl,' 'occurrents.'

Quote three scriptural, classical, or proverbial allusions from Act V.

Quote four parallel passages to any in Act V.

Quote any passage in Shakespeare's poems or plays which harmonises with the close of the play of Hamlet.

#### GENERAL QUESTIONS.

Compose brief biographies of Hamlet, Claudius, and Polonius.

Compile a memoir of Ophelia.

Draw up a comparison between the *Story of Hamlet* and the plot of *Hamlet*.

Give an estimate of the characters of Horatio, Laertes, Osric, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and the queen.

What arguments may be used to show that the queen was 'art and part' in the murder of the elder Hamlet?

What arguments may be advanced in favour of her innocence?

Show the distinction between the madness of Ophelia and of Hamlet.

Give a selection of passages which show (1) that Hamlet was really mad; (2) that his madness was feigned.

What etymologies have been suggested for the names of the *dramatis personæ* of this play ?

What historical persons have been supposed to have furnished hints for the characters and incidents of this play ?

What is the probable date of the composition of *Hamlet* ?

What faults have been found with the structure of *Hamlet* ?

What 'improvements' have been suggested or made in the construction of *Hamlet* ?

What is Hamlet's age in the play ? Give quotations in support of the view taken.

What time may be supposed to elapse from the commencement to the close of this drama ? Give quotations in proof.

What facts regarding theatricals in Shakespeare's time warrant his reference to 'inhibition' and 'innovation' ?

Supply an abstract of the *Tragedy of the Murder of Gonzago*.

Is there any reason for supposing that Hamlet's 'dozen or sixteen lines' are traceable in the text given ?

Give a narrative of Hamlet's connection with the players.

Quote Hamlet's opinions on (1) the purpose of dramatic composition ; (2) the method of acting ; (3) Divine providence ; (4) drunkenness ; (5) the nature of man ; (6) the power of temptation ; (7) friendship ; (8) on the changes effected by death.

Quote from this play a description of (1) 'a melancholy man ;' (2) a fop ; (3) a good actor ; (4) his father and his uncle.

Write out an 'argument' or outline of the plot of *Hamlet*.

Write a critique on the play of *Hamlet* (a) as a story ; (b) as a tragedy ; (c) as a philosophical exhibition of the operation of will and causation ; (d) as a moral play showing the evils resulting from breach of divine law ; (e) as a psychological exposition of the operations of the mind in health and disease ; (f) as an effort of the imagination in weaving together the facts and realities of life into fresh ideal products ; (g) as an evidence of the transmuting power of genius—founding the argument upon the difference between the Hamblet of the old *Hystorie* and the Hamlet of this play.



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